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***Instructor in English in the University  
of Wisconsin***

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## A WORD TO TEACHERS

**T**HE principles set forth in this book are the result of a number of years spent in teaching oral composition. During the year 1913-14 the writer had the difficult task of attempting to instruct freshmen of a technical college in the theory and practice of written composition. They disliked the theoretical side of the subject and looked upon written work as a drudgery, principally because of their inexperience in writing and their inability to speak correctly and fluently. After struggling unsuccessfully for three or four months in the effort to improve their English, he hit upon the idea of having the students approach the subject through the more common, practical means of expression—just plain connected, informal talk. They were asked to tell the plots of stories, novels, moving pictures; to give the substance of magazine articles dealing with subjects they were interested in; to explain how to select seed corn, how to dip cattle, how to weld iron, and so on. All the while there was an attempt to interrelate and interwork oral and written speech. The students soon discovered their rapid improvement in oral expression; then they took an interest in their written work.

Such was the beginning of the informal oral composition discussed in this text. After three years of work on the subject, he evolved the three-form system

dealt with here. This method has been tested among different kinds of students,—American and foreign born, boys and girls, high school and college students, students in technical and academic institutions. During the number of years that he and his friends have employed it among various classes of students, it has, so far as he has been able to judge, greatly assisted in bettering both oral and written work.

Although this book may serve as a basis and guide for classes which are to devote their entire time to oral composition, it is primarily designed to be used as a companion class-text along with any of the many excellent standard books of written composition now before the public. It is suggested that the oral work be employed in close connection with the written. It is advisable to have the students do some two or three weeks of writing before the oral work is taken up. By this method the teacher will become acquainted with their ability or the lack of it.

The following two plans have been found to work well.

(1) The *part-oral composition recitation*: Under this plan only a part of the recitation is given to oral themes, preferably the first portion. Four or five oral compositions to the recitation will be a sufficient number for a basis of comparison, and yet not so many as to become monotonous through successive class periods. (2) The *full-oral composition recitation*: This plan demands that one entire period a week be devoted to oral work, if there are three recita-

tions a week; or two periods a week, if there are five recitations.

Owing to the fact that oral composition is a new, difficult, and misunderstood subject, the first two chapters are intended to clear the ground and lay down general principles. This obviously means that the students will do no real oral composition work while going over these chapters. But the ingenious and resourceful teacher will discover many methods to set the students thinking and to keep them busy with problems growing out of these chapters. A few "exercises" are set down here and there, which will assist in this matter, some calling for written work and some for oral discussion in class. The latter should prove useful as a preliminary to the more independent and extended talks that are to be required later. It would be well for the teacher in the three subsequent chapters to have the students write out their oral compositions *after* they have given them—never before. The students, of course, will be expected to be more accurate as to facts, order, and language in their writing than in their talking. This dual-natured composition has the unique advantage of inciting the student to compete with himself; for if he shows deficiency in one form of composition and does pretty well in the other, it is an easy matter to stimulate him in the attempt "to catch up with himself"—make his written work measure up to his oral, or vice versa, as the case may be.

Make your assignment from the text brief. Dis-

cuss in class with the students each assignment. In a new subject of this kind, it can hardly be expected that they will master the details without regular assistance from their instructor. See that they read the illustrative material. Question them as to the good and bad qualities of each specimen.

Every teacher will discover an unlimited field in oral composition for variety and interest. Local, national and world problems and events from papers and magazines will furnish frequent live topics for class discussion. In the second form (for definitions of the three forms, see section 21), for example, he may require all the talkers to treat one subject. If his time is limited and the students have done satisfactory work in the first and second forms, he may begin the third form with the third exercise. And, again, he may in the third form make a combination of it and the first form, that is, have the students retell in their own words something they have heard or read. Of course, no student is to know that he is to be called upon for a particular selection. The instructor, either through the aid of his questionnaire (see section 68) or through his acquaintance with the student otherwise, may know that he has read a certain book, magazine article, or heard a given lecture.

The author wishes to acknowledge his obligations to many texts on oral and written composition, to articles, and to lectures and discussions on the subject. For many helpful suggestions and corrections in the manuscript, he is especially indebted to two of

**his former fellow-teachers at Indiana University, Dr. Will D. Howe, Professor of English, and Dr. Garland Greever, Associate Professor of English; to Professors H. B. Lathrop and S. A. Leonard, of the department of English of the University of Wisconsin; and to Dr. R. B. Pease, Professor of English of the Akron Municipal University. These advisers, however, are in no way responsible for such faults as may be found in the book.**

**G. P. W.**

**MADISON, WISCONSIN  
1922**





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# Informal Oral Composition

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

**1. What is Oral Composition?**—You no doubt have heard and used the term “oral composition.” Perhaps you have given oral compositions in school or college. Then you may be led to think that you know well enough the meaning of the subject with which this book deals. But the matter is treated here, both in theory and practice, quite differently from the way you have been accustomed to think of it.

It naturally has some kinship with written composition. Many of the rules and suggestions that you have learned about writing will help you in talking; especially is this true in reference to those parts of your composition and rhetoric texts treating of unity, emphasis, coherence, clearness, and arrangement of content. A written theme is thought expressed in written words; an oral theme is thought expressed in spoken words. Now since the means of expressing thought, in the two cases, differs, at least some of the principles governing the means must also differ.

Oral composition is perhaps most often confused with public speaking. Although it is true that the two do possess many qualities in common, they are markedly at variance in certain other respects. Public speaking is formal. The speaker stands before his

audience, and speaks above his natural tone and in a rather formal manner. He may use an outline or notes, or even write out and memorize his talk. None of these things is done in oral composition. Here, if the talker wishes, he may stand, but it is better to remain seated, as he thus tends to be less formal,—and one of the things aimed at is informality.

Without question, conversation bears a close resemblance to the informal consecutive talk under discussion here. However, they are not one and the same. In conversation the person speaking may be interrupted by others present, or he may stop to listen to what some one else is saying. The conversational talk is not unified; it is varied by what others may think and say. The oral composition is uninterrupted, unified. In other words, a listener gains from it an impression of a complete treatment of one topic by one person. It is more distinct as to its beginning, its development, and its conclusion than is the conversation. Yet it is a perfectly easy and natural mode of oral expression, lying between formal public speaking on the one hand and casual conversation on the other.

Its aim is to be practical, to be interesting. The average person after leaving school or college writes but few compositions, such as he was required to write when a student. But he does compose orally—and every day of his life. The salesman who sells clothing; the teacher who explains a problem in algebra; the housewife who tells a neighbor how to use a new



cake recipe; the foreman who explains to a group of workmen how to do a given piece of work; the man who tells a joke or story, or argues Government ownership of railroads,—all are making use of informal oral composition. In each instance, their aim should be to speak their thoughts so clearly that the person listening comes into as full possession of the original thoughts as human differences will permit.

We may, then, define oral composition in a general way by saying it is an uninterrupted, informal communication of thought by means of oral speech.

Below are given specimens of four ways of expressing thought: 1. A Written Composition; 2. A Public Speech; 3. A Conversation; 4. An Oral Composition. The aim is to illustrate the differences among the four, and especially between each of the first three and the fourth. A moment's reflection will convince you that it is impossible to illustrate accurately on a printed page the differences between written and spoken speech, or between informal and formal spoken speech. What is given by word of mouth has individuality and meaning added to it by voice and gesture. Yet in reading the selections given here, you will notice that the sentences of the conversation and of the oral composition are, on the average, shorter and simpler than those of the written composition and of the public speech. The sentences of informal speech are spoken very much as they come to the mind. As a result, they have less balance,

parallel structure, or other studied qualities. Similarly, the diction is less chosen and precise. Read each specimen carefully, and compare it with the one following it; then compare the four, and note any differences not already mentioned above.

### 1. *A Written Composition*

#### EDUCATION\*

Back in the days of Grecian supremacy men sat under the trees, on the plazas and under the towering arches of the Agora, and listened to the wisdom of great teachers. Men gathered for love of knowledge, for love of higher education, for pure love of learning things they did not know. The universities of old were sacred things—sacred to the thoughts and arts of high civilization. Then there was no need of coercing men with a plea for spirit. Their spirit was the love of their work—the love of learning for learning's sake. That was 1,500 years ago.

Today with our highly developed civilization, our marvels of science, our careful and specialized branches of education, we sometimes stop to wonder what it is all for. Is the average college student studying for the love of education, from pure desire for knowledge? Unfortunately education seems to be making a losing fight. Education is no longer directed towards the development of men's minds that they may call themselves well educated. It is directed

from the Daily Illini (Illinois University).

towards that perfection of an efficient mind which shall earn for the educated one, not more intellectual satisfaction, but more dollars. People educate themselves to make more dollars, and then send their children to follow their footsteps—that they may make more dollars.

What does success in the university or college mean? Does it mean whether a man has acquired knowledge, whether he can talk intelligently on sciences and philosophy and literature and languages? No; success is measured by popularity, by office-holding, by activities. If a man belongs to a dozen organizations, is active in politics, is a social lion and is known as a good fellow, he is accounted a success. He may have attained his goal, but that goal has been a mercenary, pleasure-loving goal, rather than the goal of true education.

We work to pass a course—not to learn what is in the course. Whether our minds absorb anything or not is immaterial—the object is to pass the course. Again we see the mercenary end. We think a college diploma may get us a better job, may introduce us to better society which will bring worldly prominence. Self-centered motives—all. The old days have passed before our time. Now we are hounded with the cry of efficiency. There is no end beyond it. The material end is the end sought. Men's minds are no longer storehouses of knowledge; they are machines for coining money. So drink a toast to the departed knowledge—to an education greater than

## **INFORMAL ORAL COMPOSITION**

conception of men's minds today. The  
knowledge has gone. In its place we find  
a jumble of grades, a college diploma, effi-  
ciency and all—for what?

## 2. Public Speech

AT SWANSDORF COLLEGE  
BY Andrew Wilson

Mr. Clothier, Mr. President: That  
familiar, and I am reminded of  
of that good artist, but better wit,  
one occasion, being seated at his  
whose manners he did not very  
up to him and slapped him on the  
Ollie, old boy, how are you?"  
man somewhat coldly, and said,  
name and I don't know your  
are very familiar." The man-  
that cheer are delightfully

...embarrassed today. I  
...compliment that I do not like  
...address following so  
...one who has just taken his  
...confused as to my  
...psychologists that I would not  
...I did not remember who I  
...I recollect that yesterday  
...that does not assist me in

establishing my identity today. On the contrary, this very presence, the character of this audience, this place with its academic memories, all combine to remind me that the greater part of my active life has been spent in companies like this, and it will be difficult for me in what follows of this address to keep out of the old ruts of admonition which I have been accustomed to follow in the rôle of college president.

No one can stand in the presence of a gathering like this, on a day suggesting the memories which this day suggests, without asking himself what a college is for. There have been times when I have suspected that certain undergraduates did not know. I remember that in days of discouragement as a teacher I gratefully recalled the sympathy of a friend of mine in the Yale faculty who said that after twenty years of teaching he had come to the conclusion that the human mind had infinite resources for resisting the introduction of knowledge. Yet I have my serious doubts as to whether the main object of a college is the introduction of knowledge. It may be the transmission of knowledge through the human system, but not much of it sticks. Its introduction is temporary; it is for the discipline of the hour. Most of what a man learns in college he assiduously forgets afterwards. Not because he purposes to forget it, but because the crowding events of the days that follow seem somehow to eliminate it.

What a man ought never to forget with regard to

a college is that it is a nursery of principle and of honor. I cannot help thinking of William Penn as a sort of spiritual knight who went out upon his adventures to carry the torch that had been put in his hands, so that other men might have the path illuminated for them which led to justice and to liberty. I cannot admit that a man establishes his right to call himself a college graduate by showing me his diploma. The only way he can prove it is by showing that his eyes are lifted to some horizon which other men less instructed than he have not been privileged to see. Unless he carries freight of the spirit, he has not been bred where spirits are bred.

This man Penn, representing the sweet enterprise of the quiet and powerful sect that called themselves Friends, proved his right to the title by being the friend of mankind. He crossed the ocean, not merely to establish estates in America, but to set up a free commonwealth in America and to show that he was of the lineage of those who had been bred in the best traditions of the human spirit. I would not be interested in celebrating the memory of William Penn if his conquest had been merely a material one. Sometimes we have been laughed at—by foreigners in particular—for boasting of the size of the American continent, the size of our own domain as a nation; for they have, naturally enough, suggested that we did not make it. But I claim that every race and every man is as big as the thing that he takes possession of, and that the size of America is in some sense a stand-

ard of the size and capacity of the American people. And yet the mere extent of the American conquest is not what gives America distinction in the annals of the world, but the professed purpose of the conquest, which was to see to it that every foot of this land should be the home of free, self-governing people, who should have no government whatever which did not rest upon the consent of the governed. I would like to believe that all this hemisphere is devoted to the same sacred purpose, and that nowhere can any government endure which is stained by blood or supported by anything but the consent of the governed.

The spirit of Penn will not be stayed. You cannot set limits to such knightly adventurers. After their own day is gone, their spirits stalk the world, carrying inspiration everywhere that they go and reminding men of the lineage, the fine lineage, of those who have sought justice and right. It is no small matter, therefore, for a college to have as its patron saint a man who went out upon such a conquest. What I would like to ask you young people today is: How many of you have devoted yourselves to the like adventure? How many of you will volunteer to carry these spiritual messages of liberty to the world? How many of you will forego anything except your allegiance to that which is just and that which is right? We die but once, and we die without distinction if we are not willing to die the death of sacrifice. Do you covet honor? You will never get it by serving

yourself. Do you covet distinction? You will get it only as the servant of mankind. Do not forget, then, as you walk these classic places, why you are here. You are not here merely to prepare to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

It seems to me that there is no great difference between the ideals of the college and the ideals of the state. Can you not translate the one into the other? Men have not had to come to college, let me remind you, to quaff the fountains of this inspiration. You are merely more privileged than they. Men out of every walk of life, men without advantages of any kind, have seen the vision, and you, with it written large upon every page of your studies, are the more blind if you do not see it when it is pointed out. You could not be forgiven for overlooking it. They might have been. But they did not await instruction. They simply drew the breath of life into their lungs, felt the aspirations that must come to every human soul, looked out upon their brothers, and felt their pulses beat as their fellow's beat, and then sought by counsel and action to move forward to common ends that would be crowned with honor and achievement. This is the only glory of America. Let every generation of Swarthmore men and women add to the strength of that lineage and the glory of that crown of life!



## 3. A Conversation

## JUST BEFORE THE DUEL\*

(*Sir Lucius O'Trigger, an Irish gentleman of much valor and dignity, is attempting to calm and advise his cowardly and frightened friend, Bob Acres, just before Acres' would-be opponent arrives to fight the duel.*)

*Acres* (quite nervous and talking a great deal, employing his newly coined by-words). By my valor! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance.—Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

*Sir Lucius* (with disgust). Is it for muskets and small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave these things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you. (*Steps the proposed distance for the duellers.*) There now; that is a pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

*Acres*. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box!—I'll tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther off he is, the cooler I can take my aim.

*Sir Lucius*. Faith! then I suppose you could aim at him best if he were clearly out of sight!

*Acres*. No, Sir Lucius, but I do think forty yards, or thirty-eight—

*Sir Lucius*. Pho! pho! nonsense! Three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

---

\* Adapted from Sheridan's *The Rivals*, Act V, Scene 2.

*Acres.* Odds bullets, no—By my valor! I wouldn't get any credit for killing him so near.—Do, please, Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot. If you're my friend, you'll do it.

*Sir Lucius.* Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that matter.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

*Acres.* I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but—ah—I don't believe I understand—

*Sir Lucius.* Why you don't think a man can stand up and be shot at without there being a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a *quietus* with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

*Acres (in a choking voice).* A *quietus*!

*Sir Lucius (disregarding Acres' fright).* For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey? I'm told it's a very snug place to lie in.

*Acres.* Pickled!—Snug place to lie in!—Odds, Sir Lucius, don't talk that way!

*Sir Lucius (reserved).* I suppose, Mr. Acres, you were never engaged in an affair of this kind before?

*Acres.* No, Sir Lucius, never before.

*Sir Lucius.* Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing. Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

*Acres.* Odds files!—I've practiced that, all right. There (*turning his side towards his imaginary opponent*), Sir Lucius—there—a side-front, hey? Odd! I'll make myself small enough; I'll stand edge-ways.

*Sir Lucius.* Now you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take aim (*leveling his pistol at Acres*)—*Acres* (*shying to one side*). Zounds! Sir Lucius; be careful—are you sure it's not cocked?

*Sir Lucius.* Never fear.

*Acres.* But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

*Sir Lucius.* Be easy, man.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part on your right side, it will succeed on your left!

*Acres.* A vital part! Oh, my poor vitals!

*Sir Lucius.* But, there—fix yourself so (*placing Acres so as to face full front*). Let him see the broad side of your full front.—There.—Now a ball or two may pass clean through your body and never do any harm at all.

*Acres.* Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

*Sir Lucius.* Yes; that they may—and it's much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

*Acres.* Now look here, Sir Lucius!—I'd just as soon be shot in an awkward posture as in a genteel one—so by my valor! I'll stand edge-ways.

*Sir Lucius (ignoring his remark and looking at his watch).* Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—hah?—No, faith—I think I see them coming.  
*Acres (more frightened than ever).* Hey!—What!—Coming!—

*Sir Lucius (calmly).* Yes. Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

*Acres (beginning to tremble and fidget with his clothes).* There are two of them indeed!—Well (drawing a long breath)—let 'em come—hey, Sir Lucius?—We—we—we won't run, will we?

*Sir Lucius (scornfully to Acres).* Run!

*Acres.* No—I say—we won't run, by my valor!

*Sir Lucius (losing all patience).* What the devil is the matter with you!

*Acres.* Nothing—nothing—my—my dear Sir Lucius, —but—I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow—as I did.

*Sir Lucius (trying to encourage him).* Oh, fie! Consider your honor.

*Acres (a bit more hopefully).* Yes—that's true—my honor. Do, Sir Lucius, you edge in a word or two every now and then about my honor.

*Sir Lucius.* Well, here they're coming.

*Acres (getting very close to Sir Lucius).* Sir Lucius, if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—What if my valor should leave me!—Valor will come and go.

*Sir Lucius.* Then keep it while you've got it.

*Acres.* Sir Lucius—I just know it's going.—Yes; it is certainly going!—It is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out, as it were, at the palms of my hands!

*Sir Lucius.* Your honor, man—your honor! Here they are.

*Acres (hardly able to stand).* Oh, mercy!—now—that I were safe at home! or could be shot before I know it!—

#### 4. *An Oral Composition*

##### POETRY AND SCIENCE\*

There is no conflict between science and poetry. All great periods of poetry were great periods of science. Greece, in a sense, is the mother of science and poetry. The great Latin poet Lucretius based his poetry on the scientific philosophy of Epicurus. He tried to do away with superstition and follow reason. Virgil was somewhat like Lucretius. He didn't pray to the poetic muse to teach him about poetic beauties and fancies, but to teach him the causes back of all things,—I mean the physical causes. One of the greatest English poets was, in a sense, a scientist—Milton. He knew music and astronomy. And the only contemporary he mentions in "Paradise Lost" was the greatest scientist of his age. This was

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\* Part of a student oral composition based on an inaugural lecture, "Poetry and Science," delivered at Rice Institute, Houston, Texas, October, 1912, by John William Mackall, former Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, England. See Vol. III, p. 755, *The Book of the Opening of Rice Institute*.

Galileo. Milton thought so much of him that he visited him in Italy.

Both science and poetry aim at the truth and beauty back of man and the universe. Science opens up a world of truth, of material fact. It gives the poet facts, accuracy, system. Many of our best poets were interested in science, and used scientific facts in their poetry. Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, and Browning belong to this group. Poetry helps science too. It is suggestive, imaginative. It helps speculation. It develops the imaginative faculty and aids us to see beyond the mere concrete immediately before us. It has that element of feeling which helps to keep us human.

American education has been accused of being developed on one side, that is, the scientific side. For a man to be truly educated he ought to know the facts and laws of nature, and, also, he ought to know the best things that have been thought and felt, and expressed in the most beautiful and noble language. That form of beautiful expression is poetry. Every person's education should be along these two lines, no matter what business he is to follow. If it is not, he is not an all round educated man.

The practice of oral composition is no new thing. In fact, if we but stop to think, we can see that its use antedates that of written composition. Before our uncivilized ancestors learned to communicate their ideas by means of the simplest forms of hiero-

glyphics or other crude methods of writing, they were expressing their thoughts orally. When the savage messenger of one tribe delivered his chief's message to the leader of another tribe, that messenger was merely employing oral composition. The Bible furnishes us with many excellent specimens. Below is given such an example. When the patriarch Abraham wished to select a wife for his son Isaac, he did not write a long letter to his kinsman in the city of Nahor, but he sent an intelligent and trusted servant, who was to win the bride by an impromptu talk. The speech is a unit. It is full enough, though brief and to the point. When the servant stands before the master of the house, he is able to appreciate the situation and weave into his little talk just such things as would mean most at the particular time. Notice how he shows that God has blessed his master in the past, and has especially been present to direct and bless all the happenings of this journey. A letter written by Abraham could not have been so effective as this speech.

*An Oral Composition from Primitive Man*

THE SPEECH OF ABRAHAM'S SERVANT TO LABAN\*

I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great. And He hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

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\* From *Genesis* 24:34-49.

And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when he was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

And my master made me swear, saying, "Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son."

And I said unto my master, "Peradventure the woman will not follow me."

And he said unto me, "The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house. Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give thee not one, thou shalt be clear from my oath."

And I came this day unto the well, and said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now Thou do prosper my way which I go: Behold I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, 'Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink,' and she say to me, 'Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels,'—let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath pointed out for my master's son."

And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew



water. And I said unto her, "Let me drink, I pray thee."

And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also." So I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

And I asked her and said, "Whose daughter art thou?"

And she said, "The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him."

And I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelet upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me into the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.

### EXERCISES

Write out and bring to class a list of things you have read which may be regarded as illustrative of the four types below. If possible, select from familiar works, such as other members of the class have perhaps read. Be prepared to give orally in class your reasons for classifying the specimens as you have done.

(1) *A written composition.* Roughly speaking, we may say that a given piece of writing is to be re-

garded as a *written composition* if its author does not imagine it to have been spoken by some one.

(2) *A public speech.* Although what you select now stands in printed form, why can it any longer be spoken of as a "speech"?

(3) *A conversation.* You will experience no difficulty in finding, under this head, a great many illustrations in short stories, novels, and plays.

(4) *An oral composition.* Lengthy and uninterrupted parts of conversation that stick rather closely to one centralized thought would supply your need here. The Bible, *Arabian Nights*, and long discussions by one character in plays or novels are sources to which you can go.

**2. The Basis of Oral Composition.**—Can people be taught to express themselves better orally? Are there any helpful suggestions for the person who would learn to talk in a clear, interesting manner? Men used to ask such questions about writing. But nowadays it is generally conceded that we can be taught to write better. Long before grammars and rhetorics were invented, men were writing out their thoughts, each man according to a system that he regarded as best. Some men had better order to their writing, a better style of expression,—their works were more interesting and clearer than those of other men. A few critical readers analyzed the product of these best authors to discover what were the qualities that gave them excellence. This analysis revealed in the good writings certain recurring and desirable charac-

teristics of sentence structure, paragraphing, and construction of the whole composition. As a result of these investigations, critics wrote books of rhetoric and composition, with the aim of helping the less gifted to write better than they otherwise would do.

Oral composition is now going through a somewhat similar process of development. Men have practiced this means of communication since primitive times, but, doubtless because talking is a thing so constantly indulged in, they have never taken the time to study how our informal speech might be made more pleasant and intelligible to those listening to us. We are now beginning to notice the talk of the dull speaker to see why he is dull, and that of the pleasant speaker to see why he is interesting. From this observation of bad and good talking, we are able to formulate certain principles helpful to the person who wishes to talk pointedly, clearly, and pleasantly.

And, too, we take into consideration the fact that every person is the resultant of two forces,—his heredity and his environment (our education and training being included in the latter). Heredity may have given you an aptitude for violin playing; but no matter how well you can play in a natural way, you can improve your talent by taking instruction along the line of your particular gift. On the other hand, if nature has slighted you as a musician, you can, by learning and following principles studied out by violinists, greatly develop what small musical ability you do possess. The same thing is true of talk-

ing. Whether or not you are an easy, fluent talker, it is possible for you to make great improvement by constant and systematic practice.

**3. The Value of Oral Composition.**—Oral composition is not intended as a substitute for written composition; but rather the two are to co-operate, to supplement and aid each other. If you know how to write with order, clearness, and force, you can readily transfer this ability to your oral work. And, in a similar way, if you are able to make before your classmates a unified, interesting talk, developed in smooth language and choice words, you can easily apply some of these qualities to your writing. You will tend to take more into consideration the humanness of the person who is to read what you write; and, as a result, you will endeavor to be more natural, to be free from the stiff phraseology and artificial conventions so often indulged in by young writers. You will put into your writings a touch of the individual, of self. When you learn from experience that a "bookish" talk is dull, you will know that the same quality is harmful to writing.

Since oral composition is related to public speaking, the two work in harmony. It is a transition between broken conversation and public speaking. It is easier than public speaking, for the speaker sits (if he wishes) at his ease, and talks in his usual tone. Most of us can think ten minutes on a familiar subject, and talk as long, if some one but draw us out with questions. Our chief difficulty is to connect

thinking and talking. To do so, we must for the time do an extremely important thing—imagine ourselves in the position of our hearers and mentally ask ourselves such questions as we think they would most probably ask. Now if we can answer these imagined questions in a unified, consecutive talk of from three to ten minutes, we have experience and self-confidence enough in the process of simultaneous thinking and talking to stand and deliver a similar formal public speech.

Why do some people bore us in their conversation? It is not always because they do not know enough about the topic under discussion, but either because they are indifferent as to how they express themselves, or because they do not know how to talk so as to be entertaining. If you know and practice the principles of systematic, continuous talking, you will unconsciously apply to your conversation the knowledge and experience you have gained from your oral compositions. You will be more inclined to stick to your subject, and to use better language in your conversations.

This mode of talking—between conversation and public speaking—can be made more effective than the same thoughts written out. For when you talk to people, you are present with the force of your personality—your intonation of voice, your facial expression, your gestures—to add weight to what you say. Often a pause in your speech, an ordinary word uttered in such a way as to have a striking signifi-

cance, an impatient sweep of your hand,—these will carry more meaning than you could possibly convey in many written words. You can watch the effect of your talk on your hearers, and choose thoughts and language that for the immediate time fit in. You have your hand, as it were, on the pulse of your hearers, and know what will best suit them at that moment.

The man who enters business must be constantly carrying over his thoughts to the other man by means of oral speech. His talk must be clean-cut and convincing—not loose, undecided, and halting. Professor G. H. Palmer says: “So mutually dependent are we that on swift and full communication with one another is staked the success of almost every scheme we form. He who can explain himself may command what he wants. He who cannot is left to the poverty of individual resource; for men do what we desire only when persuaded. The persuasive and explanatory tongue is, therefore, one of the chief levers of life.”\*

Again Professor Palmer very truthfully points out: “We speak a hundred times for every one we write. The busiest writer produces little more than a volume a year, not so much as his talk would amount to in a week.”† Then it does seem highly important that we be given some instruction and practice in talking as well as in writing. In every walk of life, the man who wins his point, who holds men’s respect, must be

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\*G. H. Palmer, *Self-Cultivation in English*. † *Ibid*.

able to express his thoughts orally—not necessarily on the public platform, but often to a single person, in such a way as to gain attention, to be understood clearly, to convince. The man who knows what to say and how to say it is master of himself and of other men.

### EXERCISES

(1) Write a three-hundred word theme showing why it is important for an insurance salesman (or an automobile salesman, the demonstrator of some kind of machine, etc.) to be able to express himself clearly and often at length.

(2) Write a short narrative account of some business man who lost a big sale, or “bungled” things, because he failed to be pointed and forceful in his talk.

(3) Be able to give orally in class other instances in which great loss or harm resulted from the fact that a foreman or a director failed to make himself clearly understood by his workmen.

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

**4. What an Oral Composition Assignment Implies.**—When your teacher asks you to be prepared to give an oral composition at a given recitation, he expects you to be able to talk on some subject from three to ten minutes. But do not pay too much attention to how short or long your talk is to be. Have something definite to say; and when you are talking it out in class, don't be too conscious of the amount of time it will take you to develop your theme. You are to sit in your seat and talk informally, as if you were answering at length a question asked by your teacher, or as if you were talking in an uninterrupted conversation to a friend.

**5. Have in Mind What a Good Oral Composition Ought to Be.**—If you were a jeweler who wished to make a watch better than any you had ever seen, you would have in mind an instrument perfect in every detail. You would not begin work on your watch till you were satisfied with the plan of it. To be sure, when you completed it, it would not be so good as the ideal one you had planned. But if you had never conceived of the watch perfect in the abstract, then you never could have come so near perfection in the concrete. So it is with your oral composition,—you must have in mind some definite standard as to what



a good talk is. It must have thought, and thought that is well arranged and expressed in choice language. Aside from such suggestions as you may get from this text, you can greatly aid yourself in forming an estimate of an ideal oral composition by observing the talks of other people. In planning your ideal timepiece, you would be helped by your knowledge of a great many different kinds of watches. Likewise, in other people's speech you should observe the bad and good characteristics, analyze both, avoid one and follow the other. But to gain by the characteristics of some one's speech does not mean that you are to imitate his tone of voice, his language, or his various mannerisms and gestures. Such imitation is a most serious fault. Your copying of some one else would certainly be detected by your hearers, and they would consequently lose interest in your talk.

**6. Make Your Talk Interesting.**—It often happens that a person has a good subject to talk on, and has well selected and organized material on that subject; yet he makes a poor talk—one that does not appeal to his hearers. To make a talk of this kind is wasting time and words; for when a speaker does not have the interest of his audience, what he says is like a fine lecture delivered to a stone in a desert. In such a case the lack of interest on the part of the hearers can generally be traced to a lack of interest on the part of the talker. The sensible thing for you to do is to become interested in what you are to say; force yourself to become interested, just as you force your-

self to do an unpleasant thing,—getting up on a cold morning and going to class when you may prefer lying in bed. When you begin your talk, put life into it; pretend you are interested, immensely so, and within a short time the pretended will become surprisingly real. Public speakers or actors who are speaking their parts for the six-hundredth time must do a great deal of pretending at the beginning of their speech or acting. Gradually their assumed interest develops into a reactionary, true interest when they observe that their audience is intently following them.

**7. Make Your Talk Clear.**—Remember that in oral composition your hearers cannot interrupt you to ask questions, or have you explain something not understood, as in conversation. They cannot turn back, as in a book, to get something that was not clear. Your talk must be so clear that no one can fail to follow you. This clearness is dependent upon three things:

(a) *Clear thinking on your part.* First of all, you must know what you are talking about. Clear thinking means that you are to join your ideas and thoughts in their proper relationship. The eight-year-old boy who can put together a dissected map of the United States, each state in its proper place, is relating his ideas, the states, accurately. He is thinking clearly. If you do not see quite clearly what you are attempting to tell, you cannot expect other people to follow you. Your talk has no meaning to follow.

(b) *Simple mental outline.* Before you attempt to

give your oral theme, you should have in mind a very simple mental outline—not more than three or four heads. Do not write it out. Merely decide what are the main divisions of your composition, and where these should come. (See the different orders of arranging material, Sec. 49.) The student who gave the talk on the Amoeba (see page 162) probably had some such mental outline as the following:

1. General description of the amoeba.
2. How it moves.
3. How it eats.
4. Two methods of reproduction.

Such an outline is easy to remember. The simpler and shorter it is, the better it will serve your purpose.

(c) *Clear transitions.* Talk from your mental outline. Say all you have to say about each division while you are dealing with it, as if it were a short composition within itself. Then pass to the next division. By means of transition phrases or sentences let your hearers know when you have finished one topic and are beginning another; and show by these transition devices what relationship one division has to another.

8. *Laziness.*—If you attempt to give a talk in a lazy, careless manner, you will be sure to make a failure. What you say will not be impressive. It will fall flat. Your tone of voice, your enunciation, your facial expression, and your general bearing must indicate that you are filled with energy and life.

9. *A Good Vocabulary.*—To express accurate

shades of thought, you must have at your immediate command a large vocabulary. It is not such a difficult matter for a writer to give evidence of a wide and accurate use of words, for he has time to consult dictionaries, encyclopedias, and books of synonyms and antonyms for the exact word. But the speaker who wishes to maintain interest must have stored in his mind words that spring forth—without any apparent effort on his part—and mate themselves fitly to the ideas he seeks to express.

Add to your vocabulary by noticing new words of the best speakers and writers. Look up these words in a dictionary. Keep one at hand in your room and near you when you read. If you have to get up to search for one, you generally let the word go. Discuss new expressions with your roommate or other friends. Do not attempt the laborious and fruitless task of learning a certain number of words each day. This method is too wooden, too mechanical. You have no association by which to remember such words.

If you really know words, you will soon be able, through practice, to use them with both accuracy and ease in your speech. A deficient vocabulary, like a poor memory, is often to be attributed to laziness.

**10. Voice and Language.**—Don't talk too fast. If you do, your tongue will get ahead of your brain, leaving you talking nonsense. Most people are inclined to talk too rapidly when they have studied what they are to say, and have it well in mind. If

you talk faster in your oral composition than you do in your conversation, you are probably going too fast for your hearers to follow.

Don't talk in a lifeless monotone, like the unwinding of a motion picture reel. A monotone produces sleep in your hearers.

Avoid using superfluous words, or repeating words to kill time while you are trying to think of what to say next. Many talkers have acquired—and some seem to cultivate—the annoying habit of tacking clauses and sentences to one another by repeated “and’s,” “and-ah-rah’s,” “and-so-then’s,” and other similar tiresome expressions.

Pronounce your words clearly and distinctly, but not in such a manner as to call attention to your clearness and accuracy of pronunciation. If you are over-nice in your pronunciation, people will justly think you are a slave to a dictionary. You may talk correctly without talking affectedly. Let people listen to you for *what* you say rather than for *how* you say it. The ideal talker or speaker is the one whose feeling and thought we follow so closely that we are not conscious of his gestures or manner of expressing himself. As he talks we are the speaker, feeling and thinking with him.

As much as possible, but without too much effort, follow correct principles of grammar and rhetoric. But do not pause to search for the exact word or to decide upon the nicety of grammatical or rhetorical usage. The constant pausing and correcting of your

speech are sure methods of killing the interest of your hearers. And when you have lost their interest, you have lost them. Speech is only a means to an end, and not the end itself. The true end of speech is to present to the other person our thought. According to Herbert Spencer's theory of the economy of mental attention, every person has only a given amount of mental attention that he can place on the thought before him, and if anything enters which does not help forward the process of thinking, then thinking is distracted, and a portion of our mental attention is used up with this new, intruding element. Let us apply this theory to the person who is talking. He has one hundred per cent of mental attention that he can put on the thought of what he is saying. But if he consumes twenty per cent of his attention on the grammar and rhetoric, and another twenty per cent on the diction, he has only sixty per cent remaining to place on his real thought. Thus he defeats the purpose of his talk, namely, to give his full and best thought to the other person. Principles of grammar and rhetoric must be so thoroughly a part of you that you employ them unconsciously.

Don't use abstract, high-flown language. Drive to the point with just plain, definite, understandable English. Remember that it is better to use incorrect language and be understood than to use correct language that passes over the heads of your hearers and be misunderstood.

You are not delivering a speech. Do not talk as if

you were burdened with one, and had to get rid of it as quickly as possible. You must say to yourself that you are telling something which people want to hear or ought to hear.

Your talk should be informal, sincere, conversational. It ought to show individuality, be expressive of *you* and *your* way of feeling and thinking about this particular subject.

**11. Gesture and Illustration.**—Do not play the elocutionist, nor act the part of what you are saying. Use no previously thought-out gestures. You may indicate sizes, shapes, motions, and so on, just as you would in a conversation. ✓

Often you can better demonstrate your talk by drawing on paper or the board. (See illustrations on page 162.) Bring to class any object that you can better explain by an actual demonstration. If you wish to show how a steam turbine operates, you can best do so by having in class the turbine. Or, if you are unable to secure the object itself, you may provide a substitute that in the essentials is similar to the object you are explaining. In the case of the turbine, you might use a paste-board model. The cochlea of the human ear could be explained by comparing it to a snail's shell.

**12. Naturalness and Ease.**—Children who act and talk unconscious of self are entertaining; but when they put on airs, they are tiresome. The affected grown-up is not only tiresome but disgusting.

Try to avoid thinking about your hands and feet.

Keep them comparatively still; or, rather, let them take care of themselves.

You have often been told to look people in the eyes when talking to them. But that does not mean that you are to do so continuously. Such staring is hypnotic; it drives their attention from your talk. Allow your eyes to shift from one person to another that is within your field of vision. Some interesting talkers rarely look at the person talked to. This, however, is the exception, as it is very difficult to hold any one's attention without catching his eye here and there as you talk.

If you forget something rather important while you are talking, and cannot recall it, or if you make some mistake, do not become excited or annoyed. Smooth the affair over the best you can, and continue with your subject. Keep your troubles and weaknesses from your hearers; otherwise they will lose respect for you. People like to listen to the speaker who is at ease and master of himself. They like to settle back in their seats and feel that a strong man has charge of the situation.

You ought to be conscious of what you are saying and how you are saying it; yet if you are too much so, your hearers will notice it. Don't think, while you are talking, that some one is perhaps criticizing you. Tradition says that Julius Cæsar was able to think of three things at one time. The average person is not so fortunate. In making your talk, you will have one of three things uppermost in your mind,



—your hearers, yourself, or your subject. The first two, it is true, you must have in mind, but they must not be the primary objects of your attention. In a sense you must forget them, and fix your entire attention upon your subject. It is the one thing that does need notice. The more attention you give your subject, the more your hearers will be free to follow that subject. ✕

**13. Conscious Effort in First Talks.**—The person who talks in a self-conscious manner is a bore, though what he says may be grammatically and rhetorically correct. But if you are not accustomed to giving lengthy talks, you will doubtless at first show that you are making a conscious effort to follow the principles of oral composition. Do not allow this awkwardness, this evident self-consciousness, to discourage you. The person who is just learning to use the typewriter according to systematic rules for writing finds much difficulty in thinking what keys he must touch with certain fingers. He is hindered by rules; his immediate progress is made slower by them. If he were allowed to hit with his most convenient and most active fingers such keys as were most handy to those fingers, he could write with reasonable rapidity from the first. But since it is ultimate speed and correctness that are desired, he must follow rules that prepare him to attain these results.

Through conscious effort in practice, the rules for typewriting become second nature with the stenographer. The rules are in his subconsciousness; he fol-

lows them without having to think of them. The same thing is true of oral composition. Learn the principles—not verbatim—but according to common sense and reason. Try to understand them sympathetically; make them a part of you, as you have done with the multiplication table and the alphabet.

**14. A Good Memory.**—By good memory we do not mean that you must be endowed with a mind so extraordinarily retentive that it will hold many minute details and insignificant happenings. The person who has an abnormally retentive memory may be as much handicapped by it as the person who has a treacherously weak memory. For he has a very retentive but indiscriminating memory is inclined to burden his audience with too many details, details that to the average person are trivial and tiresome. Also, he generally quotes too much of what others have said, relies too much on other men's thinking, since he can recall their thoughts so well. On the other hand, a person with a sluggish memory talks in too hazy a fashion. He is never able to give exact facts, to be definite when definiteness is required. He belongs to the "Know-Nothing Party."

Some thinkers contend that we cannot develop our memory; others, that we can. Let this contention be as it may; one thing we are certain of—that we can aid our memory by certain methods. These are as follows:

(a) *Observing closely.* By paying strict attention to things we come in contact with through our senses,

we can more easily recall those things later. You know that the lecture you listen to closely you can readily remember afterwards. The stranger whom you observe closely you can easily describe later.

*(b) Noting relationship, size, number, and so on.*

If you should for the first time take apart a watch, and not observe where the different parts go, you would have a great deal of trouble in getting the whole together again. The solutions of most of Conan Doyle's detective stories are based on Sherlock Holmes' close observation of the relationship of things, of numbers, and of the order in which events occur.

*(c) Associating with other things.* Every person who has studied any language besides his own has doubtless found that when he came upon a new word in his own language he could later remember that word much better if it came from the foreign tongue he had studied. He has two handles, as it were, by which to hold his new word. He remembers it by its English name and by its Latin name. One sure method of determining the spelling of "seize" and "siege" is to think of the French spelling and pronunciation. "Seize" comes from the French word "saisir," in which the "i" follows the "a"; "siege" comes from the French word "siege," in which the "i" precedes the "e." When you once fix in mind the French pronunciation and the French position of "i" relative to its companion vowel, you will hardly misspell these words again. You remember certain

new people you meet because they resemble others you already know, or because their names are the same as those of people you know.

(d) *Thinking about what you have observed.* The human mind is so constituted that it does not register immediately what we perceive. This fact is shown quite clearly in cases when people are knocked unconscious by a blow. Upon returning to a state of consciousness, they are unable to recall happenings that took place just before they were struck. If some one suddenly calls you away from an interesting book you are reading, you cannot, upon returning to the book, clearly remember the content of the last few sentences read. Mentally rehearsing a chapter of history you have just read helps you to retain it better.

(e) *Mnemonic schemes.* There are various memory schemes that you are no doubt already familiar with, such as mentally spelling the name of a person you meet, or writing out his name, or thinking of it as belonging to a certain part of the alphabet,—near the first, middle, or last. Some people remember numbers, dates, and other figures by noting some mathematical relationship among the different figures of the whole number. Suppose, for instance, your telephone number is 1398. Somehow, without any effort, the first figure, 1, sticks in your mind. Then remember that the first three figures are in geometric progression, the ratio being three; and that the last figure is the same as the third decreased by the first. To be

sure, this memory scheme involves a rather long and circuitous process, one that may appear absurd when explained to a person who does not go through with similar processes of remembering. But you get results by such a method; that is, you recall the telephone number by the very fact that you have forced your attention upon it and then have figured out a mathematical relationship existing among the individual figures.

(f) *Do not attempt to remember too much detail.* If you try to store away too many small and irrelevant items, you will have no room for the important ones, or the small and large will become so intermingled that it will be difficult for you to determine what is of value. Instead of trying to remember numbers up in the thousands, as "1,978,401 soldiers crossed the Atlantic" during a given period of the recent war, merely get the round numbers; say "nearly 2,000,000," or "over 1,900,000." Aim to hold in mind the important, not the trivial.

Do not excuse yourself by saying, "I have a poor memory for names and figures." You can tell this falsehood and believe it and practise it till it becomes sadly true.

#### **15. What Kind of a Subject to Choose.—**

(a) *First and always, choose something you are interested in.* You may be quite sure that if you are thoroughly interested in a certain thing, and show your interest and enthusiasm while talking, your hearers will catch your spirit of interest for the sub-

ject. If interest is contagious, so is the lack of it. Yawn and the world yawns with you.

You may choose a subject your hearers are interested in. When there is interest on the part of speaker and hearers, your talk will prove a successful one.

Or you may choose a subject your hearers are not interested in. In everyday life you often have to talk to people about matters for which they do not already care. It is your business to create interest on their part by showing that you have a thorough knowledge of the subject and are sincere in what you say. When you talk to those who are opposed to your views, you must be tactful in your attempt to bring them over from a state of opposition to one of friendliness and approbation.

*(b) Choose a subject you understand or are capable of understanding.* If you do not have much knowledge of electricity and photography, you had better not attempt to explain "How X-ray Photographs are made."

*(c) Choose a subject your hearers have the ability to understand.* This ability depends upon their general intelligence or education. A group of uneducated people might not be able to derive much information from a talk on "The Causes of Tides," but college men could easily follow such a topic.

You can judge whether your oral composition is an appropriate one by testing it with the suggestions given above. If your subject conforms to these three requirements, then it is a satisfactory one.

**16. Adapting Your Oral Composition.**—When you give a talk, you must have regard for three things: the people talked to; the subject talked on; and the time, or occasion, when the talk is given. The following suggestions will aid you in harmonizing these three objects of interest:

*(a) Your hearers.*

(1) Adapt what you have to say to meet the general intelligence and education of your hearers. (See Sec. 15, c.)

(2) Adapt your talk to meet the good will and interest of your hearers. If you are talking in favor of co-education to people who are opposed to it, you must endeavor not to antagonize them by what you say and your manner of talking. Try to win them over pleasantly. (See the Interest or Prejudice Order, Sec. 49, f.)

*(b) Your subject.*

(1) Your voice and general bearing should be in accord with your subject. If you tell a joke or humorous story successfully, there is always something in your manner of talking which shows either openly or somehow under the surface that your tale is not a serious one, though Mark Twain in his excellent essay *How to Tell a Story* (which you should read in this connection) appears to give the opposite advice when he says, "The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects there is anything funny about it. . . ." A professional story-teller like Mark Twain, Artemus

Ward, or Riley no doubt could employ to great advantage a pose of seriousness and gravity which within itself and disassociated with the particular speaker and the occasion would possess every semblance of the true serious mood, but whatever dignified and grave composure the speaker might assume, the audience would know that Mark Twain was talking and "what was coming." Consequently they would, after all, not be fooled.

(2) Your language should harmonize with your subject; if a serious, dignified subject, use serious, dignified language. This does not mean that you are to employ high-flown expressions or seek to use words which you do not normally use. Your description of a large body of American soldiers on parade after returning from the battlefields of France should be given in language suitable to the grandeur of the scene. Touches of slang, though sometimes permissible, and expressions of levity would be entirely out of place here.

(3) Your material should be so arranged that your hearers will get from it the most possible pleasure and information. (See the different orders of arranging material, Sec. 49.)

*(c) The occasion.*

If your talk does not fit in with the occasion, or time, when it is given, it will not suit those listening to you.

(1) The occasion may be a *fixed* one, that is, one whose nature you and your audience would know



beforehand, and which you should not attempt to change. Suppose some fellow student is about to be expelled from college, and you are called before the faculty as a witness in the case. You would know beforehand that the occasion would be a serious one. You must conform to the fixed occasion, adapt your talk to fit in with the tone of it.

(2) The occasion may be *varied by the speaker*. Here the occasion and the audience are neutral; they are set in no particular mood or attitude, but are waiting to be turned in such direction as the speaker wishes. He makes the occasion serious or light, as he chooses.

(3) The occasion may be *varied by the audience or circumstances*. If while you were discussing a most thoughtful subject, your chair suddenly slipped from under you and tumbled you on the floor in a ridiculous heap, you should suddenly change your manner of talking to fit the changed condition. By good naturedly giving your hearers an opportunity to laugh, you would soon be able to restore the situation to its previous plane of seriousness.

**17. Be an Attentive Listener.**—The golden rule of oral expression is: Talk to others as you would have them talk to you; and *listen to others as you would have them listen to you*. A dull talker will take on life when he sees that people are giving him strict attention. When others yawn, appear restless and inattentive, then your talk does become truly dull and lifeless. It was once said of a certain great man that

he was the best conversationalist in his circle, though he rarely said anything. He was a good listener and encouraged others to talk by his close, sympathetic attention. The moral is this: if one of your classmates is giving an oral composition that does not exactly fascinate you, one whose end you are anxiously awaiting because the talk is dull, do not show any restlessness, but force yourself to listen. He will notice your attention; it will encourage him to do better. Then when it comes your time to talk, he will doubtless show his appreciation by listening to you. Man is a reciprocative being; do him a good turn, and in most cases he will endeavor to return it.

**18. Some of the Chief Hindrances to Oral Composition.—**

- (a) *Lack of clear thinking—no purpose in view.*
- (b) *Lack of information.*
- (c) *Lack of order in arranging material.*
- (d) *Laziness and indifference.*
- (e) *Lack of common sense—that is, being artificial and formal, and not knowing when to stop.*
- (f) *Allowing rules to hinder.*
- (g) *Having a dull and unappreciative audience.*

**19. Discussion after Each Oral Composition.—**

While each student is talking, listen to him closely. When he has finished, be prepared to add any information to the subject or to ask him questions about things connected with the talk, matters which he did not speak of, but which you think should have been

included. In these after-discussions very often the most important and original thoughts are brought out. Such discussions add life and create interest, and break the monotony of one talk coming after another.

Keep in mind the following test questions to aid you in discussing each talk given in class; apply them to the specimens appearing in this text.

- (a) Did the speaker show any conscious order in the arrangement of his material? (See Sec. 49.)
- (b) Did he have a mental outline? Give his probable outline.
- (c) What unnecessary things were included?
- (d) What important things were omitted?
- (e) Was the language informal? commonplace? "bookish"?
- (f) Were you interested throughout the talk? Give reasons for your interest or lack of it.
- (g) Was the speaker himself interested in what he was saying?
- (h) Was the beginning attractive?
- (i) Was the ending effective? Did the speaker stop at the right place? Did his tone of voice indicate that he had concluded?
- (j) Was the talk clear? How was it made so?
- (k) Did the speaker adapt his talk to suit his audience, the subject, and the occasion?
- (l) What other good or bad qualities did you notice?

**20. The Infinite Value of Common Sense.**—What has been said in this text relative to oral composition is rather general. What is to be said later cannot be put into such definite terms as to assure you of being successful in talking, unless you use common sense—rely on your own ingenuity and observe the good and bad talk of other people. No mathematician can lay down absolute rules for factoring algebraic problems of varying intricate possibilities; no athletic coach can tell you how to hit a curved ball every time. Human beings are intensely complicated variables. Rules about matters pertaining to human action and conduct are not absolute cure-alls. A little common sense goes a long way towards factoring, hitting a ball, or giving an oral composition.

The three selections given below are not, strictly speaking, to be termed oral compositions, although the first two might be classified as such. In these two are illustrated certain undesirable qualities that are often met with in oral compositions. Both Jane Austen and Mark Twain knew human nature so well that they could give us life-like talks of people whose speech is rambling, uncertain, and wordy. In the third selection we shall find desirable qualities; for Lincoln saw his subject clearly, and stuck to it. He was intensely interested in what he was saying, and employed striking illustrations. Read the three selections carefully to get their meaning; then read them aloud, try-

ing to read them as you imagine they were spoken. Test them by the questions on page 45.

### 1. JANE'S LETTER\*

"Oh, yes—Mr. Elton, I understand—certainly as to dancing—Mrs. Cole was telling me that dancing at the rooms at Bath was—Mrs. Cole was so kind as to sit some time with us, talking of Jane; for as soon as she came in she began enquiring after her, Jane is so very great a favorite there. Whenever she is with us, Mrs. Cole does not know how to show her kindness enough; and I must say that Jane deserves it as much as anybody can. And so she began enquiring after her directly, saying, 'I know you cannot have heard from Jane lately, because it is not her time for writing'; and when I immediately said, 'But, indeed we have, we had a letter this very morning,' I do not know that I ever saw anybody more surprised. 'Have you, upon your honor?' said she; 'well, that is quite unexpected. Do let me hear what she says.'"

"Oh, here it is. I was sure it could not be so far off; but I had put my huswife upon it, you see, without being aware, and so it was quite hid; but I had it in my hand so very lately that I was almost sure it must be on the table. I was reading it to Mrs. Cole, and, since she went away, I was reading it again to mother, for it is such a pleasure to her—a letter from

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\* From *Emma*, by Jane Austen, Chapter 19.

Jane—that she can never hear it often enough; so I knew it could not be far off, and here it is, only just under my huswife—and since you are so kind as to wish to hear what she says—but, first of all, I really must, in justice to Jane, apologize for her writing so short a letter—only two pages, you see, hardly two, and in general she fills the whole paper and crosses half. My mother often wonders that I can make it out so well. She often says, when the letter is first opened, ‘Well, Hetty, now I think you will be put to it to make out all that checker-work’—don’t you, ma’am? And then I tell her, I am sure she would contrive to make it out herself, if she had nobody to do it for her, every word of it—I am sure she would pore over it till she had made out every word. And, indeed, though my mother’s eyes are not so good as they were, she can see amazingly well still, thank God! with the help of spectacles. It is such a blessing! My mother’s are really very good indeed. Jane often says, when she is here, ‘I am sure, grandma, you must have had very strong eyes to see as you do, and so much fine work as you have done too! I only wish my eyes may last me as well.’ ”

## 2. FIRST INTERVIEW WITH ARTEMUS WARD\*

“Now there is one thing I want to ask you about before I forget it. You have been here in Silverland—here in Nevada—two or three years, and, of course,

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your position on the daily press has made it necessary for you to go down into the mines and examine them carefully in detail, and therefore you know all about the silver mining business. Now what I want to get at is—is, well, the way the deposits of ore are made, you know. For instance. Now, as I understand it, the vein which contains the silver is sandwiched in between casings of granite, and runs along the ground, and sticks up like a curbstone. Well, take a vein forty feet thick, for example, or eighty, for that matter, or even a hundred—say you go down on it with a shaft, straight down, you know, or with what you call ‘incline,’ maybe you go down five hundred feet, or maybe you don’t go down but two hundred—anyway you go down, and all the time this vein grows narrower, when the casings come nearer or approach each other, you may say—that is, when they do approach, which, of course, they do not always do, particularly in cases where the nature of the formation is such that they stand apart wider than they otherwise would, and which geology has failed to account for, although everything in that science goes to prove that, all things being equal, it would if it did not, or would not certainly if it did, and then, of course, they are. Do not you think it is?”

I said to myself:

“Now I just knew how it would be—that whiskey cocktail has done the business for me; I don’t understand any more than a clam.”

And then I said aloud:

"I—I—that is—if you don't mind, would you—would you say that over again? I ought——"

"Oh, certainly, certainly! You see I am very unfamiliar with the subject, and perhaps I don't present my case clearly, but I——"

"No, no—no, no—you state it plain enough, but that cocktail has muddled me a little. But I will—no, I do understand for that matter; but I would get the hang of it all the better if you went over it again—and I'll pay better attention this time."

He said, "Why, what I was after was this."

Here he became even more fearfully impressive than ever, and emphasized each particular point by checking it off on his finger ends.

"This vein, or lode, or ledge, or whatever you call it, runs along between two layers of granite, just the same as if it were a sandwich. Very well. Now suppose you go down on that, say a thousand feet, or maybe twelve hundred (it don't really matter) before you drift, and then you start your drifts, some of them across the ledge, and others along the length of it, where the sulphurets—I believe they call them sulphurets, though why they should, considering that, so far as I can see, the main dependence of a miner does not so lie, as some suppose, but in which it cannot be successfully maintained, wherein the same should not continue, while part and parcel of the same are not committed to either in the sense referred to, whereas, under difficult circumstances, the most inexperienced among us could not detect it if it were, or might over-



look it if it did, or scorn the very idea of such a thing, even though it were palpably demonstrated as such. Am I not right?"

I said sorrowfully: "I feel ashamed of myself, Mr. Ward. I know I ought to understand you perfectly well, but you see that treacherous whiskey cocktail has got into my head, and now I cannot understand even the simplest proposition. I told you how it would be."

"Oh, don't mind it, don't mind it; the fault was my own, no doubt—though I did think it clear enough for——"

"Don't say a word. Clear! Why, you stated it as clear as the sun to anybody but an abject idiot; but it's that confounded cocktail that has played the mischief."

"No; now don't say that. I'll begin it all over again, and——"

"Don't now—for goodness' sake, don't do anything of the kind, because I tell you my head is in such a condition that I don't believe I could understand the most trifling question a man could ask me."

"Now don't you be afraid. I'll put it so plain this time that you can't help but get the hang of it. We will begin at the very beginning." (Leaning far across the table with determined impressiveness wrought upon his every feature, and fingers prepared to keep tally of each point enumerated; and I, leaning forward with painful interest, resolved to comprehend or perish.) "You know the vein, the ledge, the thing

that contains the metal, whereby it constitutes the medium between all other forces, whether of present or remote agencies, so brought to bear in favor of the former against the latter, or the latter against the former, or all, or both, or comprising the relative differences existing within the radius whence culminate the several degrees or similarity to which——”

I said: “Oh, hang my wooden head, it ain’t any use!—it ain’t any use to try—I can’t understand anything. The plainer you get it the more I can’t get the hang of it.”

I heard a suspicious noise behind me, and turned in time to see Hingston dodging behind a newspaper, and quaking with a gentle ecstasy of laughter. I looked at Ward again, and he had thrown off his dread solemnity and was laughing also. Then I saw that I had been sold—that I had been made a victim of a swindle in the way of a string of plausibly worded sentences that didn’t mean anything under the sun. . . . .

- (1) Why are the two specimens not clear?
- (2) Compare the two.
- (3) Try to re-tell each selection in your own way, aiming to make it as short and clear as possible.

### 3. THE PERPETUATION OF OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS\*

At what point, then, is the approach of danger

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\* From Lincoln’s Address to the Young Men’s Lyceum, Springfield, Illinois, January 27, 1837.

[destruction of the United States Government] to be expected? I answer, if it ever reaches us, it must spring up among us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

There is even now something of ill omen among us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country; the growing disposition to substitute wild and furious passions in lieu of the sober judgment of courts; and the worse than savage mobs for the executive ministers of justice. This disposition is awfully fearful in any community; and that it now exists in ours, though grating to our feeling to admit, it would be a violation of truth and an insult to our intelligence to deny.

I know the American people are *much* attached to their government. I know they would suffer *much* for its sake. I know they would endure evils long and patiently before they would ever think of exchanging it for another. Yet, notwithstanding all this, if the laws be continually despised and disregarded, if their rights to be secure in their persons and property are held by no better tenure than the caprice of a mob, the alienation of their affection for the government is the natural consequence, and to that sooner or later it must come.

Here, then, is one point at which danger may be expected. The question recurs, how shall we fortify

against it? The answer is simple. Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of '76 did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and the Laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor; let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges. Let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs. Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.

When I so pressingly urge a strict observance of all the laws, let me not be understood as saying that there are no bad laws, or that grievances may not arise for the redress of which no legal provisions have been made. I mean to say no such thing. But I do mean to say that although bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible, still, while they continue in force, for the sake of example they should be religiously observed. So also in unprovided cases. If such arise, let proper legal provisions be made for

them with the least possible delay, but till then let them, if not too intolerable, be borne with.

There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law. In any case that may arise, as, for instance, the promulgation of abolitionism, one of two positions is necessarily true—that is, the thing is right within itself, and therefore deserves the protection of all law and all good citizens; or it is wrong, and therefore proper to be prohibited by legal enactments; and in neither case is the interposition of mob law either necessary, justifiable, or excusable. . . .

They [the heroes of the Revolution] were pillars of the temple of liberty; and now that they have crumbled away, that temple must fall unless we, their descendants, supply their places with other pillars, hewed from the solid quarry of sober reason. Passion has helped us, but can do so no more. It will in the future be our enemy. Reason—cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason—must furnish all the material for our future support and defense. Let those materials be molded into general intelligence, sound morality, and, in particular, a reverence for the Constitution and laws. . . .

**21. The Three Forms of Oral Composition.**—Before entering upon a study of the next chapter, we should stop to note the different forms, or divisions, into which oral composition logically falls. It may be divided into three large classes. These divisions are quite separate, and are so arranged that the student

may begin with what is comparatively easy and simple, and conclude with what is most difficult. Although some of the general principles apply to all of the three forms, each form has its own.

(a) *The first form.* The first form consists in telling in your own words what some one else has said or written. You hear a story or lecture, or read a magazine article, and then re-tell these in your own language, just as if you were telling them to a friend. The content of what you tell belongs to some one else; the language you employ belongs to you. Of course, as we have previously discussed, your talk must be adapted to suit the particular hearers and the occasion.

(b) *The second form.* The second form is telling what you yourself have thought out and shaped into some logical order. This form resembles written composition, because you collect your material from books and magazines, from people, and from your own experience, and then arrange it the way that suits you best. You talk your composition out instead of writing it out. The selecting and arranging of material, and the language are yours.

(c) *The third form.* The third form is talking on a topic impromptu, without knowing beforehand either your subject or the language you are to use. Of course, you will not be expected to talk on a topic that you do not already have some knowledge of. The aim is to give you ease and clearness in talking without preparation on subjects upon which you have not anticipated saying anything.

## EXERCISES

(1) Write out, with brief but as comprehensive headings as possible, the mental outline for some recent lecture that you have heard. Try to select something the other members of the class also have heard.

(2) Make a list of memory schemes with which you are acquainted.

(3) Perhaps you have definitely in mind some person who as a conversationalist is long-winded and unable to distinguish between what is essential and what not to the topic of discussion. Write an imaginary conversation of this person.

(4) Read the speech of some forceful speaker and be prepared to tell in class what effect you think the speech must have had upon the audience, and why it had this effect.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FIRST FORM OF ORAL COMPOSITION

**22. What the First Form Is.**—The first form of oral composition, as we saw in the previous chapter, is simply telling in your own words what some one else has said or written.

**23. Telling What You Have Heard.**—What is said in this chapter applies mainly to what you read; for you will probably take most of your talks from the writings of other people, because here you will have a larger field from which to select. You can choose a piece of written matter when it suits your convenience, and you can read and re-read it as many times as you wish. These things are not true of what you hear.

However, if you are to take your oral composition from the speech of some one else, a few suggestions are necessary. Do not undertake to relate what the other person has told unless you understand thoroughly what he was trying to say. You should know his point of view—his mental and emotional attitude towards his subject—even though you do not agree with him. Try to analyze what he has said; pick out his main points. But give your talk in your own language. Never imitate the manner or the speech of the speaker.

**24. How to Read for an Oral Composition.**—When



ve selected an article for an oral composition, the first time—not as if you expected to be upon to tell it—but read it for your own pleasure and information. Then read it a second time to organize it, to get the framework of the whole, order topics, main points, and illustrations. Make a short mental outline of the article, or such portions as you wish to make use of. This outline when expanded and developed in your own language will be your oral theme.

Do not attempt to explain anything in the original that is not clear to you. Study it. Know it. See what was in the author's mind. Appreciate his point of view.

In your first talks, which are practice exercises intended to accustom you to doing smoothly what you have previously done loosely, read your original as many times as you like. But in your later talks, read the original once only. For the real purpose of the first form is to fit you to tell a magazine article, an editorial, a story, or give a book review, in a pleasant, informal, continuous talk after one reading.

**25. Should the Original Be Condensed or Enlarged?**—In most cases the original should be condensed. But all depends upon the ability and the interest of the hearers, the occasion, and whether the article itself is developed in detail or condensed. (See the long expository article, "Pushing Back History's Horizon," page 80.) It may have been prepared for one class of people, and you are telling it to another

class. If you were relating to a five-year-old child a story intended for an older person, you would have to explain in detail parts too difficult for the child to understand, or perhaps omit them if they were not too important.

**26. Order of Telling the First Form.**—If the order of arrangement in the original is clear and easy for you to follow, and you think your hearers can follow it without difficulty, then you had better stick to the general plan of the original. Especially is this true in telling a story or other narrative. But always feel free to make such changes as your judgment tells you, in your case, to be for the best.

**27. Do Not Memorize.**—To memorize what you are to say kills the personal touch that you ought to put into your talk. Memorizing destroys freshness and originality. You may retain the author's tone, style, and spirit, but not his language. However, in articles whose meaning or point depends upon a key phrase or sentence, you should learn this key expression. If you told Poe's story *Thou Art the Man*, you would have to retain the exact Biblical expression "Thou art the man" in order to give the story its full significance.

**28. Do Not Talk from Notes.**—You are not making a speech where notes are permissible. How many shoes do you suppose a traveling salesman would sell who talked his stock from notes? You would certainly ridicule any one who held in his hand a card of notes to aid him in conversation. In either case above, there

might be a greater array of facts and more exactness than if the talker had not used notes,—but notes dull the spirit of what is said; they kill the interest of the hearer. And when his interest is gone, facts and accuracy are worthless. Rely on yourself. Get the habit of talking without notes, and you will never feel the need for them. Oral composition is intended to be of practical service to you in actual life—where you will talk straight ahead, depending upon nothing except yourself.

**29. Do Not Forget Essentials.**—Some people have a lazy habit of forgetting an important point, and then of disrupting the entire talk to lug in with apologies, at the wrong place, the omitted essential. If you have this defect, endeavor in your first talks not to forget. Often it is advisable to omit entirely these forgotten items rather than to disjoin your talk by going back and bringing them in.

**30. Do Not Shift the Point of View.**—Most written matter is composed from the point of view of the third person. Your history, physics, geology, rhetoric, and practically all your other texts are written in this way. But a great many narratives are recounted by the first person, “I” being the one who tells what takes place. The first person is employed to tell the story in *The Cask of Amontillado*, in *Robinson Crusoe*, and in *Treasure Island*. It is best for you to tell your composition (of the first form) from the point of view of the third person, even though the original may be written in the first person. (See an original

story, page 68, and a student oral composition taken from this, page 72.) Of course, the introduction and the conclusion can sometimes be given more advantageously in the first person. (See student oral compositions on pages 72, 112.) The difficulty of attempting to re-tell the original in the first person is that you will unconsciously mix the first and third person as narrators. Another serious drawback to using the first person is that you will be compelled to employ more dialogue than by the third-person method. Dialogue is much more difficult to handle in oral composition than in written.

You will discover it to be surprisingly helpful to tell the article as if you were the composer of it. This merely means that you have digested very thoroughly what you have read, and that you are lending it that personal touch which makes your re-told account a thing of interest to the hearers. The musician who plays successfully a piece of music does so only when he has imparted to it something of his own personality. And, still further, another advantage to be derived by relating another's composition as your own is that you do away with repeated awkward references to the writer, such as "the author says," "Hodges then takes up the attitude of the tax-payers towards higher taxes," and so on.

**31. The Beginning of Your Talk.**—Tell, before you enter the oral composition proper, where you read your article, by whom and when it was written, and add such other preliminary information as will give

your audience an appreciative idea of your subject. (See first parts of oral compositions on pages 112 and 131.) Endeavor to catch the attention of your audience at the very beginning. Show interest and life in your talk. Do not give away at the first the point or conclusion of a joke or story.

**32. The End of Your Talk.**—You must know how and where you are to reach the end. To do this, you should be thoroughly acquainted with the original. Do not stumble aimlessly along till you have exhausted all you know, and then come to a flat stop. Reach a definite end by deliberate aim. Don't spoil a good ending by adding dangling explanations and summaries. It is to be assumed that your audience is following you and is intelligent enough to draw from your talk any obvious morals or conclusions. Let your tone of voice indicate that you have concluded. This last point is extremely important, and a thing you will find much difficulty in achieving.

**33. The Four Forms of Discourse.**—All kinds of writing and speaking are usually divided into four general classes: narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. Narration is relating events in a connected sequence. Its purpose, in general, is to entertain. Description is the presenting of pictures or impressions by means of words. Its appeal is to the imagination. Exposition is explaining. Its appeal is to the intellect. Argumentation is attempting to prove the truth or falsity of a proposition. Its appeal is to

reason. For a fuller discussion of the forms of discourse, consult any good book of composition.

**34. Which Form of Discourse Should You Select for Your Oral Composition?**—If you have time to give four talks in the first form of oral composition, it would be well for you to attempt one in each of the four forms of discourse. But if you are limited to one or two talks, you had better choose the form of discourse you like best and the one that is easiest for you. If you are of a narrative type of mind, and prefer incidents, short stories, and novels, you would doubtless do well in telling a narrative. If you have a keen intellect for seeing into things and understanding them, then you perhaps can explain well what you easily understand. The average person can give a narrative or expository oral composition better than he can a descriptive or argumentative one.

**35. Narration.**—Fix well in mind the plot of the narrative—the important events, the chain of causes leading up to each event, the main event towards which all other happenings lead, and the climax of the narrative. Determine why the author included such incidents as he did, and why he placed each one just where he did. Know his characters; regard them as living human beings of flesh and blood.

One very important element of narration you should not overlook is that of suspense, that is, the tactful means by which the author holds the interest of his readers to the very end.

Give only the main characters. Show who they are

by their names, short descriptions of them, and their acts. Do not enter into detail about minor characters when it is found necessary to bring them in. Instead of calling unimportant characters by their names, speak of them according to their rank or business in life. Do not say "Doctor Jones," or "William Small," but rather "a doctor," or "the gardener." Sometimes it is advisable to follow this method in respect to your main characters.

The use of much dialogue on the part of an unskillful person is harmful. Dialogue in oral composition, as we have observed before, is more difficult than in written composition, because not only must you conform to the regulations governing written dialogue, but you must modulate your voice to suit each different character and the changing moods of that character. And, too, if you employ dialogue too frequently, you are liable to forget yourself and make it a mannerism.

### **36. Suggested Sources from Which to Get Narratives for Oral Compositions of the First Form.—**

#### **(a) Magazines—**

- (1) *American Magazine.*
- (2) *Atlantic Monthly.*
- (3) *Century Magazine.*
- (4) *Collier's Weekly.*
- (5) *Good Housekeeping.*
- (6) *Harper's Magazine.*
- (7) *Ladies' Home Journal.*

- (8) *McClure's Magazine*.
- (9) *Munsey's Magazine*.
- (10) *Scribner's Magazine*.
- (11) *Woman's Home Companion*.
- (12) Any other magazine containing good stories.

(b) Books of Short Stories and Tales—

- (1) *Æsop—Fables*.
- (2) Aldrich, Thomas Bailey — *Marjorie Daw and Other Stories*.
- (3) Allen, James Lane — *Flute and Violin* (stories of Kentucky life and scenery).
- (4) Bulfinch, Thomas — *Age of Fable* (a book of mythology and legends of the ancients).
- (5) Cable, George W. — *Old Creole Days* (stories of the Creoles in Louisiana).
- (6) Craddock, Charles Egbert — *In the Tennessee Mountains* (deals with feuds and fights of the Tennessee mountaineers).
- (7) Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins — *A New England Nun*.
- (8) Harris, Joel Chandler — *Uncle Remus, his Songs and Sayings; Nights with Uncle Remus and his Friends; Told by Uncle Remus* (all these are stories and tales in negro dialect, with quaint negro wit).
- (9) Harte, Bret — stories.
- (10) Hawthorne, Nathaniel — *Tales and Sketches*.
- (11) Hearn, Lafcadio — *Kwaidan* (weird, intensely interesting tales of the Japanese).



- (12) Henry, O.—Short stories (peculiar, original style, unexpected endings).
- (13) Irving, Washington—*Sketch Book*.
- (14) Kipling, Rudyard—Stories and tales.
- (15) Lamb, Charles—Narrative essays.
- (16) Lamb, Charles and Mary—*Tales from Shakespeare* (Shakespeare's plays told in story form).
- (17) Mérimée, Prosper — *Carmen* (any other story by Mérimée good).
- (18) Munchausen, Baron—*Tales from Travels of* (highly exaggerated, though interesting).
- (19) Page, Thomas Nelson—*In Ole Virginia; Elsket and Other Stories; Two Little Confederates*—a short book (Page's works deal with days just before, during, and after the Civil War; most of them contain negro dialect).
- (20) Poe, Edgar Allan—Stories and tales (very finished and condensed).
- (21) Stevenson, Robert Louis—*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; The Merry Men; The New Arabian Nights*.
- (22) Stockton, Frank R.—Stories.
- (23) Swift, Jonathan—*The Tale of a Tub; Gulliver's Travels*.
- (24) Twain, Mark—Any stories, essays, or incidents from his books.
- (25) Wells, H. G.—*Tales of Space and Time*.

(26) Wharton, Mrs. Edith—*Tales of Men and Ghosts*.

(c) Miscellaneous Stories and Tales—

- (1) *Arabian Nights* (Oriental tales dealing with the adventures and shrewdness of the Moslems).
- (2) *The Best Stories of 1917*, etc., edited by Edward J. O'Brien (a collection in book form of what Mr. O'Brien regards as the best stories appearing each year).
- (3) *The Book of the Short Story*, edited by Jessup and Canby (contains short stories from 2500 B. C. to present).

Below are a short story and an oral composition taken from it.

### *Narration*

#### 1. *The Original Short Story*

IN JAPAN\*

By Jennie Glass

I had been living in Japan for over a year, and I still did not know how far to trust the sincerity of the Japanese. They did not seem frivolous, but they were certainly not a serious people. They were always smiling. Japanese faces were certainly happy faces, but I much doubted their sincerity.

I began musing on some of their strange customs. I thought of my servant Amaso and her white funeral

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garments. Hers was surely a case in point. Amaso had never shown outward affection toward her husband, nor he to her; but I had never doubted that they were devoted.

I recalled the many times I had watched them working together in the garden, with never a sign of affection, but always with that silent dependence of the one on the strength and goodness of the other. Amaso would work all day by her husband's side, weeding, freshening, and culling the green shrubs.

I remembered how she always carried an unusually choice flower to him for appreciation. Then, when her husband was taken ill, had tended him so carefully. I don't believe Amaso ever slept those four or five awful nights, and she insisted on doing her usual work for me as well. Not a night passed that I did not see the night-lights shimmering through their screens. And always crouched beside her husband's mat was Amaso, gently tending the sufferer.

When he died, Amaso came to me apologetically, requesting a day's leave of absence. She was sorry to disturb my honorable household by her poor sister's presence, but if the thought were not objectionable to me, this same worthless sister should perform her household duties in her absence. I was curious. She did not mention her bereavement.

"But, Amaso, why do you go?"

She answered in the ordinary conversational tone: "My husband has departed to his ancestors, and he wishes my presence at the temple."

"You poor dear, you may have as many days as you want."

She bowed in the sweet Oriental fashion and noiselessly retired. I felt that I had blundered in my question, for she seemed anxious to avoid mentioning her husband's death. It was probably too sacred a subject for speech.

But when I saw her, clothed in white garments, walking slowly from the house, I could not help accosting her again.

"I go to his burial," she said simply.

And did I see the flash of a smile in those great eyes?

My peace was disturbed. Why on every side those uncalled for, useless smiles? The courteous shallowness of these people sickened me.

I decided to sound the depths of a Japanese soul; for Amaso had returned, in her beautiful white robe, and was walking with miniature steps to her own quarters.

I called to her. I would test the value of the woman then and there. She came unassumingly before me, dropped on her knees, and as usual bowed, touching the floor with her smooth forehead. She was surely a beautiful creature. I saw a little jar which she had placed behind her, and wondered what were its contents.

I expressed my heartfelt sympathy for her sorrow. She was very sad, she said, to bring her grief before my august person—and was that a shade of a smile

in her eyes? I was horror-stricken. She wasn't heartbroken; she was glad!

Amaso rose gracefully, without effort, preparatory to taking her leave. She picked up the little jar and bowed low to me.

"That is a very beautiful jar," I ventured.

"It is a very poor thing, unworthy of such an honor."

I smiled at her quaintness.

"Let me see it."

She handed it to me, and I looked into it. My flesh began to creep. It was full of ashes; I could see a tooth and a bone that remained unburned. Amaso must have seen the paleness of my face, for she seized the jar before it dropped from my trembling hands. She saw my weakness evidently with surprise, and, peering into the jar, began to smile. Then, after looking anxiously at my horror-stricken face, she laughed aloud—a merry, twinkling laugh.

It aroused me. I shook off the stupor that had seized upon me, and faced her. "Amaso!" She bowed her head under my eye. "You will leave the premises immediately. I wish never to see again a person so hardened as to laugh over the remains of a loved one newly dead."

Submissively and without sound of a footfall, she shuffled from the room.

I reached for water and dampened my forehead. For an hour I paced up and down, nerve-wracked. It had been too horrible—too inconceivable.

Amaso had not gone. Perhaps she would refuse to go. And I would have to see her again to force her departure. I *would not* see her again. Yet I could not bear to think of her as on the place. So I made my way to her quarters, determined this time to use physical persuasion.

I hurried through their little garden—how hideous the thought of it was in the light of my knowledge. I even sobbed a little over the woman's fickleness. I rushed up the tiny steps and pushed back the screen. Before me was a pitiable sight. Amaso had committed hari-kari. There she sat cross-legged, face downward, in a pool of blood.

A cruel short knife was in her body, with both hands still clutching it.

It was an hour before I found her note and had quieted myself enough to read it. It was brief:

*Honorable Lady:*

I am sorry to bring my poor life into disturbance of your peace. I commit hari-kari, for an honorable person thought my reverend husband was not beloved and held sacred by me.

Respectfully your servant,

AMASO.

When I recovered enough to travel, I left for America.

## 2. Student Oral Composition on "In Japan"

Yesterday I read a little story called "In Japan."

I don't know whether it's true or not, but anyway it's characteristic of the way some people draw conclusions.

An American woman who had lived in Japan for more than a year had come to doubt the sincerity of the Japanese people. They were always smiling. The American didn't think them frivolous, but still she could not believe they were ever truly serious. She had a little servant, Amaso, who lived in a tiny apartment with her husband in the corner of the American woman's garden.

The American used to watch them at work in the garden; but she never saw them show the least sign of affection for each other. She didn't doubt that they were devoted; for in their silent way they did seem to depend on each other a great deal.

Then one day the husband became ill. Still Amaso did her duties about the house as cheerfully as before, always with a smile on her face. At night, though, the American saw through the screen walls of Amaso's house that she always sat by her husband, caring for him tenderly.

One day Amaso came to the lady and asked for a day's leave. She said that her unworthy sister would take her place, if it would not offend the honorable lady. The American wished to know the reason for her request.

Amaso said, "My husband has gone to his ancestors, and he wishes me to go to the temple."

The American was very sympathetic, and told

Amaso to take as many days as she wished. But she could not understand the smile on Amaso's face.

Later Amaso came out from her little house, in her white mourning garments. Her mistress thought she would test her again and see if she was really feeling any grief. She asked Amaso where she was going. And she replied, "To my husband's burial."

The American saw again the flash of a smile, in her large brown eyes. She was disgusted with her shallow courtesy.

When Amaso came back, she was carrying a little jar. The American stopped her and said, "That is a very pretty jar, Amaso. May I see it?"

Amaso answered, "Not worthy of such an honor," and handed it to her mistress; then bowed low. The lady raised the lid. There, in the ashes within, she saw a tooth and part of a bone. Amaso caught the jar just in time to save it from falling. The woman's hands were shaking, and her face was pale. Then suddenly Amaso laughed aloud. Then the woman recovered her senses enough to show her indignation at such a lack of feeling.

"Amaso, leave this place at once," said she. "I will not have any one in my service who takes such a terrible grief so lightly. I don't want to ever see you again!"

Amaso bowed, and with the jar in her hand, went slowly down the walk to her little house.

But the American was not satisfied. She waited a little while; and as Amaso did not leave, she went to



her house to put her out by force, if necessary. She entered the door, and there sitting in a pool of blood was Amaso. Both hands were clutching a dagger which she had thrust into her body.

Later the American found a little note, which read :  
“Honorable Lady,

“I am sorry my poor life has disturbed your happiness. I have committed hari-kari because an honorable lady thought I did not love and respect my husband.  
“Your faithful servant,

“AMASO.”

As soon as the American woman recovered from her shock, she returned to her own country.

(1) What kind of a mood should a person be in to tell this kind of story effectively?

(2) Should the speaker's sympathy appear to be with the American or Japanese woman? Should there be a transfer of sympathy from one woman to the other before the end is reached? If so, where should the change be made?

(3) Does the student retain the element of suspense found in the original?

(4) Notice that the student has changed (after the brief introductory paragraph) from the first person's point of view of the original to the third person'

(5) Which form of the story do you like better, the original or the re-told? Give your reasons.

**37. Description.**—You doubtless will be unable to find any single piece of description long enough and

suitable for a descriptive oral composition; but you can select an exposition or a narrative that has much description.

Remember that in description every author has two points of view towards the object being described—a physical point of view, and an emotional, or mental, point of view. The physical point of view is the physical position in which he is situated in respect to the object described,—whether he is above it, far from it, to one side of it, or within it. The emotional, or mental, point of view is the feeling or attitude of mind he has towards the object,—whether a feeling of love, pity, admiration, or gloomy sadness. Washington Irving describes Ichabod Crane as he sees him on the profile of a hill in the distance, with his clothes fluttering like a scare crow's rags. Irving's physical point of view is from the side, at a distance, with Crane on the hill, outlined against the sky. His emotional point of view is humorous contempt. Observe your author's points of view and try to retain them.

Use concrete, specific words in your descriptions. Choose expressions denoting action. Avoid the use of many adverbs. Do not make your descriptions long. Long descriptions are tiresome in written language, and more so in spoken language.

### **38. Suggested Sources from which to Get Descriptions for Oral Compositions of the First Form.—**

(a) Magazines—

(1) *Art World*.

- (2) *Country Life.*
- (3) *Literary Digest.*
- (4) *National Geographic Magazine.*
- (5) *Outing.*
- (6) *Travel* (well illustrated).

(b) Books of travel, of description of places and scenes.

(c) Books of animal and outdoor life.

**39. Exposition.**—Exposition is best given by talking it in divisions, or topics. State at the first of each division, in a few words, what you are discussing in that division. Then enter into detailed explanation. The topic sentence is more important in oral composition than in written, because it tends to make the talker stick to his topic, and it helps the hearer to follow more easily.

Often it is desirable to change the order of arrangement of the original so as to suit better your hearers.

**40. Suggested Sources from which to Get Expositions for Oral Compositions of the First Form.**—

(a) Magazines—

- (1) *American Magazine.*
- (2) *Atlantic Monthly.*
- (3) *Bookman.*
- (4) *Century.*
- (5) *Current History.*
- (6) *Current Opinion.*
- (7) *Dial.*

- (8) *Education* (articles on teaching and education in general).
- (9) *Educational Review* (similar to *Education*).
- (10) *English Journal* (deals with good English and methods of teaching English).
- (11) *Fortnightly Review*.
- (12) *Harper's Magazine*.
- (13) *Independent*.
- (14) *Literary Digest*.
- (15) *McClure's Magazine*.
- (16) *Munsey's Magazine*.
- (17) *Nation*.
- (18) *National Geographic Magazine*.
- (19) *New Republic*.
- (20) *North American Review*.
- (21) *Outlook*.
- (22) *Popular Mechanics*.
- (23) *Popular Science Monthly*.
- (24) *Review of Reviews*.
- (25) *School and Society*.
- (26) *Scientific American*.
- (27) *Scribner's Magazine*.
- (28) *South Atlantic Quarterly*.
- (29) *Survey*.
- (30) *World's Work*.
- (b) Essays and Lectures (in book form)—
  - (1) Arnold, Matthew—literary essays and lectures.
  - (2) Bacon, Francis—*Essays*.

- (3) Burroughs, John — *Wake Robin; Winter Sunshine; Birds and Poets; Locusts and Wild Honey; Pepacton; Fresh Fields; Signs and Seasons; Indoor Studies.*
- (4) Carlyle, Thomas—essays and lectures.
- (5) DeQuincey, Thomas—essays.
- (6) Emerson, R. W.—essays and lectures.
- (7) Erskine, John—*The Moral Obligation to be Intelligent.*
- (8) Hazlitt, William—essays and lectures.
- (9) Huxley, Thomas H.—*Essays and Lectures.*
- (10) Lamb, Charles—*Essays of Elia.*
- (11) Newman, J. H.—*The Idea of a University.*
- (12) Palmer, G.H.—*Self-Cultivation in English.*
- (13) Poe, E. A.—essays.
- (14) Ruskin, John — *Sesame and Lilies; The Crown of Wild Olives.*
- (15) Stevenson, R. L.—*Virginibus Puerisque; Familiar Studies of Men and Books; Memoirs and Portraits.*
- (16) Taft, W. H.—essays and lectures.
- (17) Wilson, Woodrow—essays and lectures.

Below is a long magazine article, reprinted in full. Often you will have need to re-tell just such a lengthy article. You should try your hand at reproducing the long pieces to see whether you are able to select the important matters and set them forth in good order and with coherence. Following the article are two short oral compositions based on it.

*Exposition**1. The Original Article***PUSHING BACK HISTORY'S HORIZON\***

BY ALBERT T. CLAY,

Professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature,  
Yale University

One of the romances of the last 75 years has been the unearthing of the remains of forgotten empires and the deciphering of their ancient records. A little over a half a century ago what was known concerning the ancient peoples of the nearer East, besides that which is contained in the Old Testament, could be written in a very brief form.

Israel was then regarded as one of the great nations of antiquity. Abraham belonged to the dawn of civilization. The references to other people in the Old Testament had but little meaning, for few appreciated the fact that the history of many pre-Israelitish nations had practically faded from the knowledge of man.

The pick and spade of the explorer, however, and the patient toil of the decipherer have thrown a flood of light upon the situation; ruin-hills of the great past have been opened up to the light of day, out of which emerge marvelous revelations in the form of written records and other remains.

**ASTOUNDING REVELATIONS**

These, although written in languages and scripts

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the very existence of which was unknown to man for two thousand years and more, are now forced to reveal their story of the religion, politics, science, and life of not a few of the ancient and forgotten peoples.

These researches have resulted in astounding revelations. Israel, instead of being one of the foremost nations of antiquity, is now found to have been a small power which had thrived in the late pre-Christian centuries, and had occupied a comparatively insignificant position among the great nations of its age. Instead of the patriarch Abraham belonging to the beginning of time, it is now found that he occupies a middle chapter in the history of mankind.

But, above all else, one of the greatest surprises is that the earliest peoples, instead of being barbarous or uncultured, were civilized and possessed a culture of a high order. In fact, the greatest creations of the Babylonians in literature and art belong to the third and fourth, and perhaps earlier, millenniums before Christ.

Political and religious institutions were already ancient in the days of the patriarchs. What may be regarded as primitive is found, but it points to a still greater antiquity than the earliest periods now known.

#### IMPERISHABLE RECORDS

Not only did the builders use brick instead of stone at Babel, but they also used clay for their writing material. Annual inundations deposited sand and clay of a fine quality in the valley, which was used

for this purpose. The well-kneaded, but unbaked, inscription, lying perchance beneath the disintegrated abodes of the ruined building, though yearly and for millenniums saturated thoroughly by the winter rains or inundations, when carefully extracted from its resting place of from two to six thousand years and allowed to dry, often appears as if it had been written yesterday. The original plasticity or adhesiveness of the sun-dried tablets returns, and if properly preserved, will last indefinitely. The baked tablets, as would be naturally expected, on the whole are better preserved.

The well-kneaded clay, which had been washed to free it from grit and sand, while in a plastic condition was shaped into the form and size desired. As the style of the paper used at the present time is frequently an indication of the character of the writing, the same is true, in a general way, of an ancient Babylonian clay tablet or cylinder. In most instances the trained Assyriologist at a glance can determine the character, in a general way, of an inscription by its shape or appearance.

The stylus, which was made of metal or wood, was a very simple affair. In the earlier periods it was triangular and in the later it was quadrangular. By holding it beneath the hand between the thumb and second finger, with the index finger on top, and pressing the corner of it into the soft clay, the impression will be that of a wedge; hence the term cuneiform (from the Latin *cuneus*) writing.



The cuneiform script, written upon clay, was employed by many different peoples of western Asia.

#### EARLIEST KNOWN RECORDS

The date of the earliest known inscription is still undetermined. The chronology prior to 2400 B. C. is still in a chaotic state, and yet the recent discovery of a tablet giving several new dynasties, besides many other facts which have been ascertained, offer sufficient indications of a much greater antiquity for the earliest known inscriptions than have been credited them.

The illustration of the Hoffman tablet, in the General Theological Seminary, New York City, shows one of the few known archaic inscriptions. To assign it the date 5000 B. C. would be a modest reckoning. And yet the characters are so far removed from the original pictures that in most instances it is only by the help of the values they possess that the original pictures can be surmised. This tablet, tentatively translated by Professor Barton, of Bryn Mawr, reads as follows:

“3005 Bur of a field of clay in Ushu, of the land of the setting sun, belonging to the priest of Sallatur; 36050 cubits on its Akkadward side, the lower from the beginning; 36050 cubits running along the breadth of the ziggurrat of Shamash, the brilliant lady; 36000 cubits to the temple of Shamash, the messenger of Ab, the

brilliant; 36050 cubits on the side of the mountain, the abode of Shukura, the *pa-azag*. May he give strength; may he bless."

### BRONZE AND STONE INSCRIPTIONS

While in all known periods clay was the writing material, important royal documents, votive and historical inscriptions, etc., are found on stone, and in some instances on bronze. In cutting such inscriptions the scribe imitated the characters made in clay with the stylus.

Not unlike other scripts, the cuneiform was originally pictorial; but, as in Egypt, the hieroglyphs became more and more simplified and conventionalized.

But, unlike the Egyptians, the Babylonian or Sumerian became conventionalized at a time prior to the known history of the land; and the hieroglyphs were not continued in use even for monumental purposes, but were practically lost sight of.

There are known over six hundred signs. Each of these has syllabic and ideographic values from one to more than a hundred. Combination of two and three signs have ideographic values, so that there are known at present twenty thousand values for the six hundred signs. Besides the characters are different in every age, due chiefly to the process of simplification that went on continually.

Practically every man of any standing in ancient Babylonia had a seal cylinder or seal, the impression

of which upon the document or letter served the purpose of his signature. Thousands of these have been found, cut out of all kinds of hard stones, which had been imported from distant lands, for Babylonia is an alluvial plane.

As a substitute for a seal the individual could make his thumb-nail mark upon the soft clay, or impress upon it a portion of his *ziziktu*, which was a cord attached to an undergarment. This, in all probability, is to be identified with the *zizith* mentioned in the Old Testament (Num. 15: 38, 39), and even at the present time worn by orthodox Hebrews.

#### BABYLONIAN "STENOGRAPHERS"

In all periods scribes are very numerous. This is inferred from the fact that in some periods almost every document is found to have been written by a different scribe. In the Assyrian period women are known to have belonged to this profession. The scribes wrote the legal documents, as well as the private letters of individuals. They even placed the seal impression upon the legal document, in proximity to which they wrote the name of the person to whom it belonged, usually the obligor or the witness.

In the time of Hammurabi (about 2000 B. C.) there was at hand an officer called the Burgul, who was prepared to cut temporary seals upon a soft material for those who did not possess them. This is the custom in Oriental lands in the present day.

In Constantinople, for instance, the curbs of cer-

tain streets are lined with scribes prepared to write for the illiterate. An occasional man among them is provided with little blank stamps in soft brass, and with an engraving tool is prepared to cut the signature or initials of the man upon one of them while he waits. The impression of the stamp is affixed to his letter in place of his signature.

### THE "CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY" OF NINEVEH

The cuneiform inscriptions in clay, stone, and metal that now repose in museums and in private collections number hundreds of thousands.

Several ancient libraries and immense archives have been found. Years ago the literary library of Ashurbanipal (668-626 B. C.) was discovered at Nineveh. It appeared to the excavators that the library had been deposited in the upper chambers of the palace, and that when the building was destroyed they fell through to the lower floors, where they were found in masses.

The inscriptions showed that they had been arranged according to their subject in different positions in the library. Each series had a title, being composed generally of the first words of the first tablet. Usually at the end of each tablet its number in the series was given.

In the library were found epics, religious, astrological and magical texts, chronicles, paradigms, syllabaries, etc. This is the only library that has been found in Babylonia or Assyria which can be regarded

as a literary library, where efforts have been made to assemble literary and other works produced at times not necessarily connected with the era to which the library belonged.

The scribes of Ashurbanipal searched the temples and schools of Babylonia and Assyria for these productions and re-wrote them in what was then modern Assyrian.

There are many indications of the transcription of older texts, or the handing down of them from one period to another. Not a few tablets in the Ashurbanipal library have subscriptions or colophons stating that they are copies written according to originals found in such and such a city.

Several instances of earlier versions have been found. For example, there is a version of the Gilgamesh represented in the Yale collection by a tablet, and in the Berlin Museum by a fragment which belong to a time fifteen hundred years earlier than the library of Ashurbanipal.

The same is true of the deluge story, which is represented by more ancient versions. Moreover, the one in the library of J. Pierpont Morgan, dated about 2000 B. C., clearly shows that it is a copy of a still older version. Not only is the name of the scribe who made the copy given, but where the original was defective he wrote "broken."

In more recent years temple and school libraries have been found at Nippur, Sippar, Larsa, Babylon, and Erech. The libraries of the first three sites be-

long chiefly to the third millennium B. C.; those of the last two belong to later periods.

They are primarily temple school libraries, and contain also the tablets used by the different priests in the temple service, as hymns, prayers or liturgies, omen or divination texts; also syllabaries or dictionaries, grammatical exercises, mathematical texts, etc. At Nippur school library material belonging to the second millennium was also found.

Besides these libraries immense archives of temple administrative documents belonging to all periods have been found in practically all sites where excavations have been conducted by the Occidental or by the illicit diggings of the Oriental.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS CAREFULLY KEPT

But especially large archives of these documents numbering several hundred thousand and belonging to the third and fourth millenniums B. C., have been found at Tello, Nippur, Drehem, Jokha, and recently at Ur.

These tablets record the payment into the temple stores of tithes or offerings of drink, vegetables, or animals, of taxes, rents, loans, and also the disbursement of this property. The temple stood in relation to the people as the State does in modern times, and these are the records of administration.

Exhaustive accounts were kept of what was received and what was disbursed. Great storehouses held the income. There were immense cattle yards,

in which the property of the temple in live stock was cared for, as, for example, the one at Drehem, close by the city of Nippur.

The cattle not disposed of were intrusted to herds-men, with whom contracts were made, setting forth their responsibilities and regulating their profits; documents referring to granaries, freight boats, messengers; to payments of temple officials; in fact, records similar to the business transactions such as are ordinarily found in the administrative offices of our present-day institutions.

Next to the temple documents, in point of numbers, come legal and business documents of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One hundred thousand tablets of this character would be a reasonable estimate of this class of literature in the different museums and private collections, belonging to all the periods. These documents are one of the most fruitful sources of light thrown upon the every-day life of the people, not to mention the valuable historical and chronological data gathered from them.

#### AN ANCIENT MARRIAGE CONTRACT

There are dowry and marriage contracts, partnership agreements, records of debts, promissory notes, leases of land, houses, or slaves, deeds of transfer of all kinds of property, mortgages, documents granting the power of attorney, tablets dealing with the adoption of children, divorce, bankruptcy, inheritance; in fact, almost every imaginable kind of deed or contract

is found among them. Following is an example of a marriage contract:

“Nabu-nadin-akhi, son of Bel-akbe-iddin, grandson of Ardi-Nergal, spoke thus to Shum-ukina, son of Mushallimu: ‘Give me thy Ina-Esagila-banat, the virgin, to wife to Uballitsu-Gulu, my son.’ Shum-ukina hearkened unto him and gave Ina-Esagila-banat, his virgin daughter, Uballitsu Gulu, his son. One mina of silver, three female slaves, Latubashinnu, Ina-silli-esabat and Taslimu, besides house furniture, with Ina-Esagila-banat, his daughter, as a marriage portion he gave to Nabu-nadin-akhi. Nana-Gishirst, the slave of Shum-ukina, in lieu of two-thirds of a mina of silver, her full price Shum-ukina gave to Nabu-nadin-akhi out of the one mina of silver for her marriage portion. One-third of a mina, the balance of the one mina, Shum-ukina will give Nabu-nadin-akhi, and her marriage portion is paid. Each took a writing (or contract).”

This is followed by the names of six witnesses, that of the scribe, and the date.

It is from the contract literature that we become familiar with the life which pulsed in the streets and the homes of the ancients who lived in Babylonia and Assyria so long ago. Through it we learn to know the personalities of the people, their plans, their



needs, and the things against which they guarded, which, it might be said, are the same as those familiar to us in the present day.

#### A TRIBUTE TO THE BABYLONIANS

Again and again are we forced to exclaim as we become acquainted with the doings of the ancients from these sources that our boasted civilization has developed very little in the essentials of life.

These documents are so numerous that we will know individuals of certain periods more intimately than we know of some of the centuries of our Christian era. When the tablets, for example, of the first dynasty of Babylon, about 2000 B. C., have been published, the history and genealogies of many families covering several generations will be known. In the late period several old families of Babylon and Erech can be traced for centuries, notably the Edibi of Babylon and such families as Ekur-Zakur, Akhutu, etc., of Erech.

#### SAFEGUARDS AGAINST FORGERY

Not a few of the contracts, especially of the early period, were encased in a thin layer of clay, which served the purpose of an envelope. The contents of the document are usually duplicated on the case, which also contains the seal of the obligor. It was less difficult to alter amounts on a clay tablet than it is at present upon paper; when the document was encased and the envelope bore the seals of the obligor,

and in many instances of the witnesses, the obligee, who held the document, could alter the envelope, but he could not change the tablet; for if he peeled off the case which contained the impressions of the obligor's seal he could not replace it.

The number of official and personal letters of most periods that have been found is also quite large. From the royal letters, such as those of Hammurabi to one of his governors, or those found in the library of Ashurbanipal, considerable information is gained dealing with the civil affairs in the land and with foreign affairs of other lands, especially Armenia and Elam.

The letters of Hammurabi that have been found were addressed to one of his governors, stationed in Larsa. They had been encased, and the envelope contained something like "To Sin-idinnam." On the receipt of the letter the case was peeled off. It began: "Unto Sin-idinnam, thus says Hammurabi."

His letters show that he gave personal oversight to the minor affairs of his kingdom. Special attention is devoted to the construction and dredging of canals. He superintended the collection of revenues and exercised control over the priesthood. He punished money lenders for extortion or for failing to cancel mortgages after they had been satisfied.

#### REGULATING THE CALENDAR

One of the letters shows how the calendar was regulated. As the Babylonians observed the lunar month,

it became necessary to insert an intercalary month every third year. In a letter to Sin-idinnam, after calling attention to the fact that the year was deficient, he ordered that the month upon which they were entering should be called "Second Elul" instead of Tishri, the month that followed Elul.

But he added: "Instead of the tribute arriving in Babylon on the 25th day of Tishri, let it arrive in Babylon on the 25th day of Second Elul." That is, he pushed forward the calendar; but he was unwilling to wait a month for his revenues.

The letters of a private character throw light upon personal affairs. These deal with all the different phases of life. The father is reminded of a broken promise; his son writes him that "thou, my father, didst say that when I went to Dur-Ammi-Zaduga . . . 'I will send a sheep and five minas of silver, in a little while, to thee.'"

A tenant desires a good cow and a creditor compels his debtor to meet his obligations. A prisoner pleads with his master for deliverance, calling the jail a starvation house, and asserting that he is not a robber, but the victim of the Sutu, who fell upon him and took away the oil he was carrying across the river.

#### A LOVE LETTER OF LONG AGO

A young man sends his endearing inquiry concerning the health of his beloved, saying: "To Bibeä, thus says Gimil Marduk: may the gods Shamash and

**Marduk permit thee to live forever for my sake. I write to inquire concerning thy health. Tell me how thou art. I went to Babylon, but did not see thee. I was greatly disappointed. Send the reason for thy leaving, that I may be happy. Do come in the month of Marchesvan. Keep well always for my sake."**

The letters, besides being extremely valuable for rewriting the political history and the life and customs of the people, offer most important philological and lexicographical material.

Many of these also were encased, but only the address, with the seals of the sender, appear on the outside. Not a few letters have been found encased in their original envelopes—that is, they are unopened. They can only be explained as being duplicate copies retained by the sender.

The Code of Hammurabi, written about 2000 B. C., upon a large and somewhat irregular stele, is perhaps the most important monument of antiquity that has been found for a century. It is the product of a civilization of a high order. In codifying his laws, Hammurabi arranged them in a definite and logical order, based upon accepted judicial decisions.

It is now definitely ascertained, as had been inferred, that the code is based on other codes that preceded it. In the Yale Babylonian collection there is a tablet written in Sumerian, which seems to be a prototype of the code. Although it is not dated, the script indicates that it is older than the Hammurabi Code.

## ALL CONTINGENCIES COVERED

A number of its laws bear upon subjects covered in what are known as the Sumerian family laws, but which are, nevertheless, quite distinct. Others deal with the leasing of boats and animals, even making provision, as does the Hammurabi Code, when a lion kills a hired animal.

It is not impossible that the code was extensively influenced from sources distinctly Semitic; perhaps Aramæan. This is suggested by such episodes as the story of Hagar in the Old Testament, which is not in accord with the Mosaic Code, which was doubtless extensively influenced by the Amorite culture, but is similar to the Babylonian.

Abraham may have become acquainted with Babylonian law while sojourning in southern Babylonia, if the theory that Ur of the Chaldees is to be located in that region; but it is more probable that he learned it in Aram, his ancestral home.

On some subjects but one law is given, while upon others as many as thirty. The following brief outline will afford an idea of the subject-matter treated: Witchcraft, witnesses, judges; concerning offenses involving the purity of justice, as tampering with witnesses, jury, or judge; crimes of various sorts, as theft, receiving stolen goods, kidnapping, fugitive slaves, burglary; duties of public officers in their administration; laws relating to landlords, tenants, creditors, debtors; canal and water rights, licenses, messengers, herdsmen, gardeners, slander, family re-

lationship, marriage, divorce, desertion, breach of promise, adultery, unchastity, concubinage; rights of women, purchase-money of brides, inheritance, adoption, responsibility for all kinds of assaults; fees of surgeons; branding of slaves, fees and responsibilities of builders and boatmen; hiring of boats; agricultural life, the purchase and punishment of slaves who repudiate their masters, etc.

### GRADES OF SOCIETY

In no better way is it possible to become acquainted with the every-day life of the ancient Babylonian than by a careful study of the Hammurabi Code.

The code recognizes three grades of society—the aristocrat, or gentleman, the poor man, or pleb, and the slave. Among the ranks of the first mentioned were the professional men, the officers, and the tradesmen. The second class included the freedman who had been a slave.

There was a graded scale for these three classes as regards offerings that were imposed upon them. Besides these three grades in society, the code legislated also for certain classes of men and women, professions and trades.

It has been the custom with most peoples in a large part of the ancient, as well as the modern, Orient to base a betrothal upon an agreement of the man or his parents to pay a sum of money to the girl's father. In Babylonia this "bride money," together with the gift of the father and other gifts, formed the marriage portion which was given to the bride.

There were prudential reasons for this practice. It gave the woman protection against ill-treatment and infidelity on the part of the husband as well as against divorce; for if she returned to her father's house she took with her the marriage portion unless she was the offending party. If she died childless, the portion was returned to her family. If she had children, the marriage portion was divided among them.

In case the girl's father rejected the suitor after the contract had been made, he was required to return double the amount of the bride price. The betrothals took place usually when the parties were young, and as a rule the engagements were made by the parents. If the father died before all the sons were married, when the estate was divided the sums needed for those not having wives were deducted before the distribution was made.

#### MARRIAGE CONTRACTS REQUIRED

A marriage contract was necessary to make a marriage legal. In some of them peculiar conditions were made, such as the bride being required to wait upon the mother-in-law, or even upon another wife. If it was stipulated that the man should not take a second wife, the woman could secure a divorce in case her husband broke the agreement.

At the husband's death the wife received her marriage portion and what was deeded to her during her husband's life. If he had not given her during his life a portion of the estate, she received a son's share

and was permitted to retain her home, but she could marry again. A widow with young children could only marry with the consent of the judge. An inventory of the former husband's property was made and it was intrusted to the couple for the deceased's children.

The code provided that if a man divorced a woman she received her marriage portion. In case there was no dowry, she received one mina of silver if the man belonged to the gentry, but only one-third of a mina if he was a commoner.

For infidelity the woman could divorce her husband and take with her the marriage portion. In case of the woman's infidelity, the husband could degrade her as a slave; he could even have her drowned. In case of disease, the man could take a second wife, but was compelled to maintain his invalid wife in his home. If she preferred to return to her father's house, she could take with her the marriage portion.

#### MEN HAD TO SHOW GOOD CAUSES BEFORE THEY COULD DISINHERIT A CHILD

The father had no right over the life and death of his child, but he could treat it as a chattel. If he pledged a child for a debt, it became free in four years. For disobedience the father could cut off his child's hands. If the father desired to favor a son, he could do so only during his life, and then by contract, for after his death the laws of inheritance fixed the child's share.



Charges of wrong-doing before a judge were required before a son could be cut off from sonship. It was only after a second offense and for a serious misdemeanor that a child could be so disinherited.

The code contains a number of laws referring to the adoption of children; and, from the large number of contracts discovered, it seems that adoption was extensively practiced, especially by aged people, that they might be cared for. There are also a large number of laws in the code that refer to slavery and many documents dealing with the purchase of them.

In this connection reference might be made to the code's legislation for surgery and the practice of medicine, and also the many medical texts that have been found, most of which have come from the library of Ashurbanipal. Not a few of the medical formulæ refer to headache. The theory of disease being largely that of demoniac possession, whenever headache attended a sickness the seat of the demon was considered to be in the head.

#### UNIFORMITY IN MEDICAL PRACTICE

This resulted in great uniformity in treatment. Salves or liniments, hot and cold, were used in rubbing the head. Fumes of drugs were allowed to play about the head in the hope that the demon would be driven out by the pleasant or unpleasant odors. Some of the drugs acting as counter-irritants, or soothing the nerves, doubtless many of the concoctions were

found to be helpful by the physician, and were adopted as remedies by other people.

It has recently been shown that the terms for such substances as cossia, chicory, ammonia, cummin, and cynoglosson, occurring in medical treatises of the Greeks, are to be traced to the Babylonians.

The Code of Hammurabi fixed the charges of physicians and surgeons. If a physician cured a broken limb, his fee from the gentry was fixed at five shekels; from the commoner, three; and from the slave, two. The surgeon for an operation upon the upper class received ten shekels; the lower, five; and a slave, two.

#### HARD ON THE DOCTOR

In order to discourage the surgeon from making rash operations, severe penalties were fixed in case of an unsuccessful one. If the patient died, the surgeon's hands were cut off. In the case of a slave, he had to replace him with one of equal value. If the slave's eyes were lost, he had to pay half the value of the slave.

If the veterinary surgeon was successful, he received one-sixth of a shekel; but if the animal died, he had to pay one-sixth of its value.

There were a large number of literary inscriptions found in the library of Ashurbanipal. Several mythological poems, besides fragments of others, were found, of which the seven tablets of creation are among the most important. Apsu and Tiamat, who represent the primeval watery chaos, were the first

creators. They were followed by other generations of gods, whom they sought to destroy.

This resulted in the fight of Marduk with the primeval goddess Tiamat. He slays her and splits her in halves like a fish, half of which he uses to make a firmament to keep back the celestial waters, and the other half the earth to hold back the subterranean waters.

Another very important poem is that which recounts the deeds and adventures of Gilgamesh, an early ruler of Erech, about whose name these myths are associated. It was written upon twelve large tablets and found also in the library of Ashurbanipal. This version was copied from older originals, of which a large but fragmentary tablet is preserved in the Yale Babylonian collection; and there is also a fragment in the Berlin Museum.

#### A BABYLONIAN "PARADISE LOST"

Other important mythological poems are the flight of Etana on the back of an eagle to heaven and his fall to earth; the myth of Adapa, in which he failed to obtain immortality by refusing to accept food at the advice of the god Ea; Ishtar's descent into hades, etc.

A large number of hymns and liturgies have been found at various sites. At Tello, a few belonging to the early Sumerian period were discovered. At Nippur, Sippar, Erech, and Larsa many were found, chiefly belonging to the early period, about 2000 B.

C.; at Erech and Babylon also some of a later period. By the help of these the history of Babylonian worship will be written.

At present the earliest known liturgies are written in Sumerian, but after about 2000 B. C. it generally became the custom of supplying the Sumerian text with interliner's versions in the Semitic vernacular. Whether the excavations at some of the earlier Semitic centers in the northern cities will yield earlier original Semitic liturgies, and show that the Sumerians were indebted to these, remains to be seen.

Moreover, it is known that the psalmist among the Semitic Babylonians used the Sumerian liturgies in their service and continued to use them till the closing days of Babylonian history. In other words, Sumerian was the liturgical language.

#### A CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN

A consciousness of sin pervades the liturgies of Babylonia. By the use of them the sinner desired to pacify the gods, who manifested their anger by bringing woes upon mankind. Through lamentations and sighings the penitent sought relief. It must be conceded that the Babylonian prayers were such that must have stirred the soul to its depths. The fundamental element of religions is therefore inherent in these liturgies.

It has been pointed out that the Babylonian penitential psalms are similar in form to the Biblical. The contents and character, however, are quite dis-

**inct.** We have in the Babylonian crude polytheism and practices of a natural religion, which, of course, is responsible for a different conception of the atonement sought for. Another large body of temple rituals was the incantations or magic rituals by which the priests exorcised the evil spirits. The rituals were quite extensive in variety. There were, for example, the "burning" series, in connection with which, with charms, magical figures were consumed by fire representing the fever, the headache, the evil demon, the Labartu, or female demon.

#### READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES IN STARS AND LIVERS

These texts seem to emanate from the later periods, which would mean a degeneration of the higher forms of worship, exactly the reverse of what is found among other peoples. But whether other libraries, when excavated, will show that these crass religious expressions of man are older than the religious literature of a higher order remains to be seen.

A large number of texts have been found in the various libraries dealing with hepatoscopy and astrology, the two chief systems used by the Babylonian priests or "inspector" (*baru*)—that is, they divided the future by the inspection of the liver of the sacrificial animal and by the observation of the starry heavens.

The Babylonians, as also many other ancient and in fact even modern nations, believed that the liver represents the seat of the soul; and since, according

to their notions, the soul included the mind as well as the heart, the inspection of the liver in the case of an animal that had become sacred by being offered to a deity furnished a means of ascertaining what the deity himself had in mind to do.

The observation of the heavens and the interpretation of unusual astronomical and meteorological phenomena also enabled them to determine the will of the deity. This method of divining seems to have been introduced into Babylonia later than liver divination.

One of the important results of cuneiform research is the new historical geography which has been reconstructed with its thousands of data. Hundreds of important cities have been identified among the partially inhabited or wholly deserted ruin-hills of western Asia. An inscribed brick or a dated tablet, or perchance an inscribed cylinder found at a particular place, may have given the clue to the identification of the ancient city.

#### NEBUCHADNEZZAR DELVES INTO THE PAST

For example, on a cylinder found at Wana-Sedoum, now in the Yale collection, which is one of several of its kind made by the royal scribe of Nebuchadnezzar (605-561 B. C.), the king recounts his restorations of various temples. In the closing lines he refers to his restoration of the temple of Lugal-Marada at Marad, a city which has not been hitherto identified, as follows: "From distant days its old foundation stone

no previous king had seen. Its old foundation stone I sought for, I beheld, and upon the foundation stone of king Naram-Sin, my ancient ancestor (who lived about 3750 B. C.), I laid its foundation. An inscription with my name I made and placed in the midst of it."

Recently there was also added to the Yale collection an inscribed stone, written in the ancient script, which came from the same site as the Nebuchadnezzar cylinder, namely, Wana-Sedoum. It proves to be one of the stones of Naram-Sin which Nebuchadnezzar saw. It refers to the building of the temple of Lugal-Marada at Marad by a hitherto unknown son of Naram-Sin, namely, Libet-ili, who was then patesi of Marad. It reads: "Naram-Sin, the mighty king of the four quarters, the subduer of nine armies in one year, when those armies he overcame, and their kings he bound and brought before Enlil, in that day Libet-ili, his son, patesi of Marad, built the temple of Lugal-Marada in Marad. Whoever alters this inscribed stone may the gods Shamash and Lugal-Marada tear out his estate and exterminate his seed forever."

#### A THOUSAND SITES UNOPENED

Future maps of Babylonia will include the site of Wana-Sedoum, with its ancient name, Marad. The city is almost due west of Nippur, on the Euphrates, and a little south of west of Daghara. While many of the ancient sites of Babylonia have been identified, as Sippar, Babylon, Nippur, Erech, Larsa, Ur, Lagash,

etc., and have been partially excavated, *hundreds in Babylonia and thousands in western Asia, with their ruin-hills practically untouched, retain their names as well as their secrets.*

Babylonia is covered with mounds of debris, the accumulations of millenniums. Mesopotamia, the ancestral home of the patriarchs, is completely dotted with these tells. And when we read in the historical inscriptions of the hundreds of sites which have not been identified, it is impossible even to surmise what marvelous revelations are in store when those ruin-hills are opened by pick and spade.

Not long ago the Hittites were only known to us from the Old Testament. Now we know a mighty nation of Asia Minor sufficiently powerful to invade Babylonia a little later, 2000 B. C., and to be able to force Egypt later on, in the time of Rameses II, to an inglorious treaty with them.

Not long ago Boghaskuel, one of its ancient capitals, with its ancient records written in cuneiform, was discovered (see *National Geographic Magazine*, Feb., 1910). Other sites are being excavated, and as a result the science of Hittitology is gradually becoming developed.

These Babylonian and Assyrian researches have had important bearings upon the Old Testament. It was largely the desire to secure inscriptions, by the help of which the historical value of the Hebrew Scriptures could be tested, that inspired many in the early years of these researches to support excavations.



## EXPLORATION AND THE SCRIPTURES

Imagine the interest that was aroused when the first Assyrian inscription was deciphered, referring to events recorded in the Old Testament, or when George Smith announced that he had discovered among the tablets of Ashurbanipal a portion of the deluge story which closely resembles the Biblical account.

Several creation stories have been handed down by the Sumerians and Babylonians. The one showing the greatest resemblance to the Biblical references to the creation in Genesis and in the poetical books was found in the library of Ashurbanipal. After depicting the conflict between Marduk, the god of light, and Tiamat, the primeval goddess of chaos, it says the heavens and the earth were created.

The Sumerian cosmology, found at Sippar, symbolizes the establishment of order out of chaos. Still another fragment of a creation story, written in Sumerian and found at Nippur, makes another goddess, Nintu by name, the creator.

## ACCOUNTS OF THE FLOOD

Besides the eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh epic found by George Smith, of the British Museum, which contains the deluge story so closely resembling the Biblical account, several others have been discovered. There is a Ninevite recension also in the British Museum and a fragment of an earlier copy.

Another, the oldest dated story of the flood, is in the library of the late J. Pierpont Morgan. It was

written in the reign of Ammizaduga, a little later than 2000 B. C. This represents a god calling upon Adad, the weather god, to cause a destructive rain-storm, and Ea interposing in order to save the diluvian hero.

Several years ago a little fragment of another Semitic story was found in the University of Pennsylvania Collection, but more recently a Sumerian version, which makes Zuigidda of Shuruppak the hero of the flood.

It has been suggested that the Zuigidda tablet belongs to a series, fragments of which have been found, and that series contained lists of kings who ruled before and after the deluge to the time that the tablet was written, indicating that perhaps it is a Babylonian history of the world.

Should this fragment prove to belong to such a series, it would be a striking parallel to the brief history of the world as found in the Old Testament. An interesting feature of the tablet containing the reigns of kings is that a period 32,234 years is claimed between the deluge and the last king of Isin, who lived a little before 2000 B. C. Just how many kings ruled in this period is not known. In the previous period, however—that is, between the creation and the deluge—Berosus (who lived about 300 B. C.) informs us ten primeval kings ruled for 432,000 years.

#### BIBLE STORY CORROBORATED

The Babylonian inscriptions have thrown a flood of

light upon the patriarchal period. Although many modern critics have until recently declared the entire historical situation different from that found in the Old Testament, they are now forced to acknowledge it to be in strict accord with the many details gathered from the monuments. The actual personal existence of the patriarchs, however, is still held by these scholars to be completely disproved.

Other scholars, however, hold that, notwithstanding the fact that we have peered in vain for references on the monuments to the patriarchs, inasmuch as all such details that we could expect to see corroborated have been in an almost remarkable manner, that there is every reason to believe that the patriarchs themselves were historical.

But not alone the patriarchal period receives new light, but so many archæological sidelights have been thrown upon the Old Testament that there is scarcely a page that has not been illuminated by them. Yes; it can be said that additional chronicles of the kings of Judah and Israel can be gathered from the Assyrian and Babylonian monuments.

These archæological discoveries, moreover, while illustrating and substantiating the historical value of much of the Old Testament records, also give rise at the same time to new historical and literary difficulties. It is found that the traditional view of the Old Testament must be modified considerably—a knowledge of which, however, does not disturb the conception of the Old Testament as a religious book.

**A HUNDRED BABYLONIAN RULERS PRIOR TO ABRAHAM**

To cite a single instance: the Biblical chronology of the creation, whether we accept the Septuagint figures and make it 5500 B. C. or the Hebrew at 4000 B. C., cannot be harmonized with that which we know at present. The Old Testament gives a genealogy of ten names covering 427 years, according to the Greek version, between the deluge and Abraham.

In order to show that the period was longer, it is only necessary to mention that about one hundred rulers of Babylonia prior to Abraham are now known, and how many more will be restored to history in the near future it is impossible to tell.

The work of uncovering the ruin-hills of Assyria and Babylonia is only in its infancy. The spade and the pick have only begun to dispel the darkness which had shrouded the mounds of these lands. Hundreds of ruins remain unnoticed and unrecorded, because many are low and insignificant, and yet some of them contain right beneath the surface remains of a hoary antiquity. Destroyed in some early epoch, the city was perhaps never rebuilt. Surprise upon surprise awaits the explorer.

**2. *Student Oral Composition on***  
***"Pushing Back History's Horizon"***

I thought I'd talk on "Pushing Back History's Horizon," which I read in a magazine. It told of a lot of things we have learned about the Babylonians,

because folks have been excavating over there. They have dug up thousands of tablets with writing on them. These tablets are several thousand years old. They tell about the life of those times.

These folks were about as civilized as we are now, in certain ways. They could write, but had to write on these clay tablets, and then they had to bake them. And they had to write with a triangle-sort of instrument, which they held in the hand and pressed down on the clay tablet.

A whole library of these tablets was found at one of their cities—I've forgotten the name of the city. The tablets seem to have been put on the second floor, and then the building fell down.

They believed in all kinds of signs, and were very superstitious. They cut open animals to look at their livers to tell what was going to happen in the future. And they foretold things by the stars, too. Doctors thought headaches were caused by evil spirits.

Doctors had to cure their patients or pay for them if they died—that is, if they were slaves. If the person was higher up, the law was harder on them.

The writer of this article said Abraham isn't as old now as he used to seem to us, because we have found out that a great many rulers lived before him.

In another place he tells about a flood the Babylonians had that was very much like ours.

Some of the kings made good laws then, such as laws about how a father should treat his son, and what divorced people had to undergo. I think these

laws were pretty good, considering how far back they were.

This is about all I can think of now.

3. *A Second Student Oral Composition on*  
"Pushing Back History's Horizon"

A few days ago while I was looking over some magazines in the library, I ran across three interesting articles in the *National Geographic Magazine*. All three were along pretty much the same line—the oldness of man—how much older man is than we think, and how much older civilization is than we think. The article I liked best was "Pushing Back History's Horizon." It was written by Professor Clay, who is a teacher of Assyriology and Babylonian literature in Yale University. He has done considerable work as an excavator in the Orient.

We have come to know a great deal within the past seventy-five years about Babylonia. We know that this country was a cultured, civilized country long before the time of Abraham. Some of the tablets, or writings, dug up in recent excavations are at least seven thousand years old. So Abraham is a kind of modern hero, although we have been accustomed to thinking of him as very old in the world's history.

The method of writing back in the Babylonian days was quite different from our method. People wrote, or rather engraved, on clay tablets. A metal or wood instrument called the "stylus" was used to impress the characters on the soft clay tablets. The stylus

was either of a triangular or quadrangular shape, depending on whether it was used in the early or late Babylonian days. If what was being written was very important and liable to be forged, an outer covering of clay was put over the original impressed tablet. This covering had the same writing as the inner tablet.

The scribes, or tablet engravers, corresponded to our present-day stenographers. Many of them were women, as to-day. The "stenographers" wrote what was dictated to them. Then the "dictator" signed the tablet—not with the stylus, but with his thumb nail or with his personal seal.

Some years ago Ashurbanipal's library was excavated at Nineveh. It was what you might call a modern library. For the librarians used a cataloguing system very much like the system used in our present-day libraries. The tablets were arranged in the library according to subject matter. They had titles and numbers given them. A great variety of subjects was covered: religion, astronomy, magic, accounts, poetry, literature, and so on. Many of the tablets were copies of older writings, or copies of tablets from other cities. The copies of the old writings had both the old and new language on them—kind of inter-linear translations. Other libraries were unearthed, but the Nineveh one was the most important.

Among these old writings are many letters. Some of them are letters from father to son, business letters, love letters, and so on. One rather interesting love

letter was from a young man to his sweetheart in Babylon. The sentiment is very modern—full of compliments and worshipping. In the first of the letter the young man calls down the blessings of the Babylonian gods upon his lady. Then he asks whether she is well; for he went to Babylon hoping to see her, but he did not. He inquires as to why she was not there. He closes by bidding her to keep well always, for his sake.

Many laws of the great law-maker Hammurabi were found. Some were on the ordinary clay tablets, while some were cut on stone or bronze. These laws deal with all kinds of subjects.

Marriage laws were strict. People had to have marriage contracts—written statements of what property was given on each side. If the woman secured the divorce, she could go back to her father and take her dowry with her. If the husband wasn't true to his wife, she could easily get a divorce. If she wasn't true to him, he could divorce her, make her a slave, or even drown her.

Laws dealing with parents and children also were strict. A father could not kill his child, or punish him without good cause. He could not sell the child for a period longer than four years. If the child were very disobedient, the father could cut off his hands. A child could not be disinherited; the law fixed his amount of inheritance.

The doctors seem to have been harder hit by laws then than now. The law fixed the doctor's fees. If



he cured a slave, he got a certain sum; if it was a middle class person, he got about two and a half times as much as for a slave; if it was a rich person, he got about five times as much as for a slave. If the patient died, and it was judged to be the doctor's fault, his hands were cut off. If it was a slave, the doctor had to put another slave in the dead one's place.

There were a great many tablets about other things, but I thought these the most interesting.

(1) It would be an almost impossible task for a student to re-tell the entire original. From such a long article he should select what he regards as important or interesting.

(2) Did the student in Number 2 (the first oral composition) have anything definite in mind to talk about? What are some of the faults with his talk?

(3) Do you think the student who told Number 3 had a mental outline? Did he select the essentials? Did he vary his order of telling from the original? Compare the two oral compositions.

(4) Don't forget to use here, as well as elsewhere, the test questions given on page 45.

(5) Would the inclusion of difficult Assyrian and Babylonian names have helped or harmed the student's talk? Would the effort to remember such names tend to lessen the remembering of more impor-

tant facts? Would Spencer's theory of the economy of mental attention apply here?

**41. Argumentation.**—An argumentative oral composition is more difficult for the average student than an expository or narrative one.

Determine what is the proposition being argued. A term cannot be argued. The proposition must be in the form of a complete, clear sentence. It may or may not be stated in sentence form in the magazine article. If it is not given thus, see if you can phrase a single proposition sentence that will embrace the entire argument. When you have found the proposition, then determine the main points, or contentions, on the writer's side of the question, and the support, or proof, he gives each point. Likewise, if he gives the contentions on the opposite side, get these points and his refutation of them. When you have fixed in mind the proposition and the points supporting the author's side, and the points on the opposite side with their refutation—then you may feel at ease, for you are ready to proceed on solid ground. These main points constitute your mental outline.

In your introductory sentences it is best to state the proposition. You may give the contentions on both sides of the question, but in most cases it is undesirable to do so. On account of the prejudice of your audience, it is advisable first to set forth the facts, and then lead up to the conclusions (your main points) as they arise from these facts. Another objection to giving your main points in the introduction is

that your talk will have the appearance of a formal argument. (For sources from which to get argumentative oral compositions, see the list of magazines in Sec. 40, a.)

### *Argumentation*

#### *1. The Original Article*

##### DOES AMERICANIZATION AMERICANIZE?\*

BY GINO SPERANZA

### I

"I have a solemn vow registered in heaven that I will preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." These words, spoken by President Lincoln at a critical moment in the life of the Republic, are, in substance, what the alien repeats when admitted to American citizenship. Imagine, however, what must have been their significance to Abraham Lincoln, and what, at best, they possibly can mean to tens of thousands of "new Americans" when reciting them in the oath of allegiance which makes them our fellow citizens! And yet we wonder why things are not all as they should be to-day, and why we should be obliged to ask ourselves again, as we did half a century ago, how it is that "an instructed and equal people, with freedom in every form, with a government yielding to the touch of a popular will so readily, ever would come to the trial of force against it."

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\*Reprinted by special permission of the Editors of the *Atlantic Monthly*; from the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 125, page 263.

Of the causes behind the existing unrest this paper will attempt to deal with only one phase—our attitude and policy toward the immigrant as a potential citizen, premising the statement that such attitude and policy have labored under one fundamental error: the failure to distinguish clearly and consistently between the *human* rights of immigrants and their *political* rights, between our human duties toward *them* and our political duties toward our *commonwealth*. To their human rights and to our human duties toward them we shall refer here only incidentally, dwelling instead upon the study of a policy which has tended, and tends, to grant political rights to a very large number of aliens wholly unprepared for American life, and utterly unqualified for participation in the government.

As we look back, we see that three methods or processes have found favor among us at various times as means of converting the alien into an American: naturalization, assimilation, and Americanization. The first, which once was supposed to possess a sort of special sanctifying grace *per se*, has sunk back in public opinion to its purely legalistic function; the second has been relegated with the melting-pot to the top shelves of social laboratories; while the third is now the object of a nation-wide "drive."

There is something both stirring and touching in the almost religious belief that many Americans held regarding naturalization in the early days of immigration to this country: they honestly and sincerely

relied upon it as an almost instant solvent for changing a German or a Swede into an American; they looked upon it, in their intense patriotism, as a rite with well-nigh sacramental and mystically spiritual effects.

With the decline of the belief in naturalization as an infallible process of transformation, there came into favor, as a spiritual aid to the former, the less legalistic process of assimilation. The method sounded logical and was picturesque and attractive. We all fell under its sway more or less, especially the social workers and the schools of philanthropy. It was, on the whole, a useful movement, not only because it showed the essential inadequacy of naturalization, but especially because it made us realize very vividly the human rights of the alien in our midst and our indifference to such rights.

The war, which passed like a steamroller over numberless favorite and popular theories, served also to show the limitations of assimilation as we had attempted to develop it and the strength of alien nationalism, even—and indeed especially—in what we had hopefully considered safe and “desirable” North European stock.

## II

The ancient problem being still with us, and looming large on the background of present-day labor unrest, American optimism promptly has come to the rescue with a new and sure remedy—Americanization.

It is part of our enthusiastic idealism, part of our "habit of practical performance," to wish to correct every trouble and right every wrong *quickly*; and, in order to do it quickly, we often refuse to see any subtle and intimate complexity in the problems which confront us, but cheerfully and rather naively "simplify" them and reduce them to "essentials," which can be, as it were, surgically treated with ease and precision.

But there are problems and processes so obscure and complex in their causes, so slow, intricate, and subtle in their development and ramifications, as to be refractory to any simplification and impossible of any accelerated or swift solution. One of these is Americanization, which, like every essential and effective change of nationality, involves two distinct processes and two vital decisions in a man's life: a divesting one's self of a deep-rooted patrimony of ideas, sentiments, traditions, and interests, and an honest and whole-hearted acceptance of, and a participation in, an entirely new set of ideas, sentiments, traditions, and interests.

In order to grasp the difficulties in the way of real, and, therefore, of the only worth-while Americanization, let us consider the processes involved in the reversal of such conversion. Think how suspicious we are of any instance of de-Americanization; how suspect, for instance, to the popular mind is the Anglicization, not only of a Waldorf Astor, but even of a Henry James, and, generally, how taboo is the

man who "turns." Or let us illustrate the process on a large scale as being nearer to our own problem: let us suppose that the French government, or a large section of the French people, had decided to attempt to Gallicize our boys of the A. E. F. while they were in France, and had made a nation-wide "drive" to accomplish it in five years, at the end of which time any of our men who said they wished to change would have been admitted to French citizenship. Will any American claim that this would have worked at all, or that the French citizens thus secured would have been much of an asset or a help to the French nation? I do not give this as a parallel example to the process of Americanizing our immigrants; but I do contend that, on the whole, the Gallicization of a million picked American youths, at a time of tense and stirring life, would have been infinitely easier and more possible than to convert a million mixed Syrian, Russian, Greek, Slav, and Finnish peasants—or even French, British, and Italian subjects—into reliable American citizens, as we claim we can do in this country. To feel that the powers of attraction and assimilation of America are tremendous is both true and patriotic; but to practise the belief that such powers can work miracles—such as the rapid conversion of the mixed and unstable immigrants of Europe into *real* American citizens—is sheer superstition and, as such, the child of ignorance.

The fact is that there is much loose thinking, inexactness, and sentimentalism on the subject of Ameri-

canization. The very fact that the first professorship of Americanization in this country was fitted into a department of political economy indicates how even trained minds tend to look at the process from too narrow a standpoint: for might it not reasonably be urged, with equal force, that Americanization belonged to the department of history, or of philosophy, or of psychology? But consider some of the means in vogue today to secure Americanization: for instance, anything which betters a man, such as being taught to read and write, is, of course, in a roundabout way, Americanization; but why call it that, as something new, instead of using the exact word such betterment has meant for ages past—schooling? Imparting a knowledge of civics, government, and history is likewise, in a sense, Americanization; but why claim for it a power that is no greater than and no different from what it was when the identical thing was called education? So, also, bringing the alien “into contact with what is best in this country,” which a recent publication glibly announces as a “new method” in this process, is in one sense Americanization; but is it not the same thing as what was more correctly called social or public service, or, more anciently, Christian duty?

Changing their names does not render inapplicable methods applicable, but only lulls us into a dangerous contentment. That the insufficiency or inadequacy is being grasped in certain quarters is evidenced by the conditions and provisos proposed here and there



as necessary for the success of the "drive." Thus Secretary Lane, in a popular magazine, cautions his readers that "before we take up this work of Americanization of others, we must first be certain that we have Americanized ourselves." The implication that even real Americans may be in need of Americanization shows the essential intricacy and slowness of the process, even at its best.

To understand the real significance of Americanization (and a lack of clearness on this point is the root of the trouble) we must consider it in relation to the larger question of *nationality*, of which it is only a part or instance. One of the lessons of the Great War of peculiar significance to us in relation to our immigration problem is the tremendous strength of national or ethnic sentiment; indifferent men, average men, comfort-loving and peace-loving men, as we have dramatically witnessed, are, in the emergency of a real test of its powers, ready to die for it. It makes heroes of phlegmatic Flemish burghers, and martyrs of ignorant Slav peasants; it reacts in the blood of thousands of our German-Americans, who, we had firmly believed, had been rendered immune to the old call of the blood by the circumstances of birth and education in the wholly new environment of American life. Right or wrong, happily or not, the racial call persists, potent, assertive, even audacious. Worthy or unworthy, we saw it destroy treaties and policies, learned theories, and the most carefully constructed checks and balances.

In the face of a theory we discovered a condition; in the presence of an idealization of our own patriotism we found an equally strong and all-absorbing love of nation and of race in infinitely poorer, less advanced, and less blessed lands.

Why then imagine—especially, why do our colleges and universities imagine—that any large body of aliens can be Americanized *quickly*, if at all; that they can undergo a sort of miracle of trans-nationalization by any nation-wide “drive” of kind words, by a smattering of education, or by new legislation? I do not say that Americanization is not possible, but I contend that history, science, human experience, and good sense point to the conclusion that mass Americanization or speedy Americanization (of the real kind, which, I trust, is the only one the colleges and legislators want) is impossible by any of the methods suggested or applied. And this largely because, as it has been said, “the central fact about nationality is not,” as so many Americans believe, “a political force at all, but a spiritual force.” Being largely a spiritual process, it may be swift and almost sudden with certain types of unusual men, and under certain very special circumstances; but for the great mass of aliens coming here,—and even for many children of alien parents,—the change can be only slow and subtle in its working, if it is to be real and enduring.

Many politicians and some students have lacked the courage to say what one, like myself, of foreign descent should frankly assert and defend—that this

is, and must remain an essentially and fundamentally American country, to be governed solely by American-minded men in an exclusive American way, and for wholly American ideals. Any compromise on this seems to me spiritual treason to the Republic. Shame to those of us, not of the old stock, who fail in these days of trouble for our country to defend with all our heart and mind what is first and foremost the heritage of freedom of the old stock, and is ours only in so far as we are individually worthy of it, and not because we can vote under it.

There have been too many sentimental pleas, too many spurious arguments about this being a land of immigrants and all Americans the children of immigrants. What is America, first and above all, if not the development, essentially, of Anglo-Saxon ways of thinking and doing, and, more specifically, of New England ideas and ideals? Nor must we overlook the fact that "in all history," as John Fiske has pointed out, "there has been no other instance of colonization so exclusively effected by picked and chosen men as in New England." Let us ask ourselves in full honesty what claim of equality of performance or of American qualities there can be between the great mass of immigrants and their children and those colonists and their direct descendants, except the sheerest of legalistic equality. Who will be so foolish, or so hypocritical, as to contend that the vast majority, or even a substantial number, of the immigrants who have come or are coming to this country

can be classed as the "picked and chosen men" of Europe? Political cowardice, squeamish conscientiousness, and cant have avoided a frank, open, and frontal attack against what is variously styled "the Irish vote," the "East Side vote," and the like, as if the toleration of anything but a thoroughly and wholly American vote were not a gross failure in the practice of an elementary American duty.

What are all the schools and professorships of Americanization worth while we allow, in daily practice, such destructive distinctions in the political life of the country? "For the successful conduct of a nation's affairs," says President Hadley in his book, *The Relation between Freedom and Responsibility*, "we must have a certain degree of conformity between its political institutions and the moral character of its members." The duty, then, of every Irishman and grandson of Irishmen, of every Italian and son of Italians, in this land is to conform his moral character to American political institutions; to conform, not his speech or even merely his vote, but his every thought and hope and plan—for it must be an unreserved spiritual conformity—to this, his country. There cannot be two nationalisms even if one is major and one minor, even if one claims to be American first and German second.

### III

It will justly be urged that criticism is not necessarily helpful unless it is constructively suggestive

as well as destructively analytical. While I do not believe that the current methods or plans for Americanization can bring about what is claimed for them, yet, in themselves, they are praiseworthy; in so far as they are new names for schooling, education, hygiene, and the Golden Rule, they are the minimum of what we should do—and should have begun doing decades ago—for a somewhat helpless and often ignorant and exploited class of our inhabitants, both alien and native. These are all part of our human duty and of our public duty to our fellow men.

The objection to such methods—which fail to Americanize, even though they may humanly improve, those beings subjected to them—is that, in effect, they accelerate and widen the inclusion of new “foreign votes” in the American electorate. In this respect they perpetuate the basic error of all our immigration policy—that of inviting and hastening that purely legalistic Americanization known as naturalization. This, in a land swept by large migratory currents of varied and even nondescript nationalities, where manhood suffrage is the fundamental law, constitutes a real growing danger.

No country has so cheapened the electoral franchise as the United States, by practically giving all the rights thereunder for the mere asking. The only controlling and controllable test is a certain arbitrarily fixed length of residence; for it will hardly be urged that the so-called “Intention,” supported by a declaration of forswearing allegiance to foreign poten-

tates, and so forth, enters seriously into the transformation. Length of residence, that is, time (in a process which in the majority of cases requires some generations), if an element at all, should be a very long period. Some students have urged fifteen years, but to the writer, twenty-five years would not seem too long for what might be called a splendid political apprenticeship. Provision, however, should be made for shortening such apprenticeship upon proof of special qualities of a high order, or of public or quasi-public service rendered to this country.

Length of residence was chosen because it was easily proved and easily ascertainable; but today no one could claim it as either a safe or even a rational test. There are services and sacrifices which an alien may undergo in this country a month after landing, of such a character as to entitle him to immediate or honorary citizenship; there are acts and omissions by an alien resident here ten years which should bar him everlastingly from citizenship or divest him of it if naturalized. The real test for citizenship should be political *fitness* and personal *worthiness*; and if the lawyers argue that these are too subtle and spiritual to be defined by statute, then it were better that we should suspend naturalization for half a century while we try to live down our past errors in this field.

This nation has two functions in history and toward mankind: first, to disseminate principles of democracy, freedom, and humanity among all men throughout the world; and, second, to be a nation characteris-

tically American from top to bottom. It is this latter function that we have sacrificed—if not seriously endangered—by our policy and desire of forcing quick or accelerated Americanization, be it political or spiritual. The present “drive” has already brought forth a number of bills in Congress which, in effect, would compel aliens, after a certain length of residence, to become “citizens” or leave the country. Yet the more “raw” citizens (if I may use the term) you take in, helping the process by a veneer of Americanization, the more you threaten our characteristically American form of democracy. “If we believe,” as I said several years ago before the American Academy of Political Science, “in the great system of self-government developed and stubbornly fought for by the English people through centuries of training and struggle, we may fairly claim that its continuance and stability will depend on a citizenship attached to and understanding its spirit and history and in sympathy with its political ideals.” “We want and must have *real* spiritual allegiance; we want and must have only such citizens as think in terms of American life.” As the finest contemporary exponent of America said, in his *American Ideals*, there is “one quality that we must bring to the solution of every problem, that is, an intense and fervid Americanism.” Even in the great struggle now going on between capital and labor, “the outcome,” as President Hadley has said, will depend “on the character of the people,” that is, on whether our business shall be dominated by “the

spirit of the adventurer or by the spirit of the Puritan."

If such American spirit and such American citizenship cannot be obtained by any rapid process working on our alien masses,—and I contend that it cannot except in special cases,—then why encourage or permit the naturalization of such masses, or, as at least one Congressional bill provides, force American citizenship on alien residents? Naturalization is not the right of an immigrant, but a privilege which the United States can grant, withhold, or condition.

We are constantly concerned with the restriction of immigration, but it is a far more important matter for America to bar the immigrant from its body-politic than to shut him out from the country. Indeed, I believe we should encourage a back-and-forth alien migration, rather than a stable one which ends in becoming an alien colonization in our midst. If we cared for our American party more and for our political or our labor party less, we would concentrate our efforts, not so much on excluding able-bodied alien workmen who are needed to help develop the resources of our country, but more on the urgent and vital need of barring numberless "new-made" citizens from our electorate.

For over fifty years the tendency in this country has been to make American citizenship easily achievable; today, when we begin, though darkly, to see the evil consequences of such largesse, we grasp at the slender raft of Americanization to escape the storm;



and in the name of such an empirical and simplistic remedy, some of our Congressmen, with equal good faith and simplicism, propose legislation which, in effect, will add to our un-American or pseudo-American vote.

We cannot remedy the past, or cover our mistakes, by a resort to disfranchisement; but we can and should oppose any attempt, made in however good faith, to increase the number of such Americanized citizens within our body-politic, who tomorrow may have the power as well as the desire, to change the character of our democracy. The foreign vote is already making itself felt in some parts of our country as a distinctly foreign vote. Let us then take to heart the words written many years ago by the most balanced observer and student of our immigration problem, Richmond Mayo-Smith; words which today sound like a patriotic warning:

“The change in social ideals wrought by infiltration of peoples having different customs and habits of life can be detected only as these habits and elements of life gradually become dominant, and as we see the decay of habitudes which we had valued. We then exclaim against the degeneracy of the times, forgetting that we ourselves have admitted the elements which have superseded the old.”

## 2. *Student Oral Composition on*

“Does Americanization Americanize?”

The February issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* has a

timely article entitled "Does Americanization Americanize?" by Gino Speranza. Mr. Speranza is a former attaché of the American Embassy at Rome. He was chairman of the Committee on Crime and Immigration of the American Institute of Criminal Law, and was a special correspondent from Italy during the Great War.

The article begins with a well known and striking sentence from Lincoln—"I have a solemn vow registered in heaven that I will preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." Mr. Speranza remarks that the foreigner who becomes a citizen of the United States is compelled to declare allegiance to his new country in just about the terms of Lincoln's oath, but that a foreign-born person could hardly utter such words with the feeling and sincerity of Abraham Lincoln.

In all our plans and processes of Americanizing we overlook the great difference between the human rights and the political rights of foreigners. And also we should not confuse the political rights of native born Americans with the political privileges that our government may confer upon foreign born inhabitants.

We have attempted three schemes of making American citizens from foreigners: first, naturalization; second, assimilation; third, Americanization. The first two plans have proved failures—though much hope was put in them at the time. The third, Americanization, is now being urged in a kind of national "drive."

To make a good voting citizen out of an alien requires much time. It cannot be done by merely giving him all the rights and privileges enjoyed by an American. Practically every foreigner has an innate preference for his native land to any other country, and it takes time to grow this sentiment out of him. We, as Americans, must think how we look askance at an American who takes out naturalization papers in another country. Or, again, what would we think of France if she had set out to Gallicize the American soldiers who went over to help her fight? We, in many cases, are trying to Americanize foreigners who have come to this country at our invitation to help us in the labor problem. Hasty Americanization is utterly impossible. We cannot in a short time make citizens of a conglomerate of English, French, Germans, Polanders, Italians, and so on.

Education and social service may prove helpful towards converting immigrants into citizens, but these methods cannot perform the miraculous in a few years.

It is un-American on our part to attempt the kind of hasty Americanization now before the country. The United States does have some inherent and distinctive characteristics that mark it as an Anglo-Saxon country, and not a country settled by miscellaneous, rambling immigrants. John Fiske recognizes this fact when he says that America was settled mainly by Anglo-Saxons and by the most select and chosen settlers that ever attempted colonization. Such

people naturally built up a country strongly individual in character. Now, the kind of immigrant we are trying to naturalize is not select and chosen, but he is haphazard, miscellaneous, and, in many instances, undesirable as a citizen. Only politicians catering to voters can compare these incomers to the early colonists.

So, then, if we continue our present scheme of Americanizing, it will ultimately end in our having in America a very large percentage of these naturalized citizens who do not possess the true spirit of Anglo-Saxon democracy that the founders of the Republic possessed. Such a state of affairs will mean that in those sections of the United States where the foreign element predominates, foreign ideas and principles of government and morality will prevail. Such voters will put into office men of their own liking—and in most cases these will be foreigners. Already this is the state of political affairs in many parts of our country, where the “Irish vote,” the “German vote,” the “East Side vote,” and the like are spoken of. We must always hold in mind that citizenship for native Americans is a *right*, but for foreigners it is merely a *privilege* to be conferred or withheld by our government.

What, then, is the solution to the problem? There are two policies we may pursue. One is to cease urging foreigners against their will to become naturalized. Such forced citizens can never be desirable. Indeed, we ought to encourage a back-and-forth migration.

This would give foreigners their human rights and yet not harm the political rights of native Americans, who have different ideals of government from those of aliens.

The second policy applies to those immigrants who show a real desire and merit to become American citizens. But we should not seek to make them citizens over-night; we must resort to the more safe but slow, mellowing process of time. Give personal human rights but not all political privileges under twenty-five years. Of course, should a desirable foreigner show himself worthy of political privileges before the end of twenty-five years, we could give him citizenship. But in all cases his citizenship should be merely provisional. If he did not, or would not do the right thing with the privileges given him, they should be taken from him.

In order to be an American, he must possess American characteristics. He must have political fitness and personal worthiness. These possessions cannot come in a few months or years. Secretary Lane says that even some Americans need to be Americanized—all of which shows the slowness of the process of Americanization.

- (1) Does the student who re-tells this article have a mental outline?
- (2) Does his talk indicate that he has carefully read the essay?

### 3. *Student Oral Composition on "Where We Stand"*\*•

The last issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* has a good article growing out of the recent war. It is by John Galsworthy—entitled "Where We Stand." He believes the most civilized country is that one which has the largest number of healthy, happy, wise, and gentle citizens. According to his test, then, there is now no country in the world very highly civilized.

We have not progressed much in civilization, because we have false notions of what progress means. We believe that any kind of material progress is advancement in civilization. We think that every time we make some wonderful discovery or invention we have done humanity a great good. But we do not stop to think that where one of these inventions or discoveries helps in one direction it may push us back still farther in another. A knowledge of chemistry and high explosives seems a good intellectual possession, but when these things are turned into deadly war engines of poison gas and life-destroying shells, we have not helped humanity. And the trouble with such would-be progress is that it is not capable of limitation. Germany invents a gun that will shoot seventy-five miles and kill one thousand people. Immediately we go to work and improve on their machine of human suicide; we must invent one that shoots a hundred miles and kills fifteen hundred peo-

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\*The original essay may be found in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 125, page 173.

ple. Then it is up to Germany to outdo us. And so the see-saw is ever up and down.

The discovery of coal has seemingly blessed man, but when we think of the unsanitary conditions produced by coal smoke, and of the millions of real human beings who must live and work underground and in unhealthful conditions, we question its sum total good as compared with its great evil.

In the midst of all our feeble efforts to do something in this world, we forget two stern facts: first, that human nature is practically constant at all times and under all circumstances; and, second, that in some overpowering, fatalistic way, the very machines which we invent and the discoveries we make with so much hope are more powerful than we; we make them with one purpose in view, but too often they turn and almost immediately are engaged in doing great harm that we had never dreamed of their doing. They are like the giant in Mrs. Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. The magician Frankenstein labored to create a live man. He succeeded in making a man-like monster, eight feet tall. He was greater than his creator; turned against him with all his powerful force, tormented him, drove him from home, and finally killed him.

We have false notions of political progress, too. When we tore down autocratic thrones, we looked for the millennium. We tried to enlarge nationalism at the expense of the freedom and privileges of the individual. The recent war has greatly enlarged the

field of active professions into which women may enter. On the other hand, such professions newly open to women are tending to destroy home life, which has been supported and made dear by them.

Our progress, such as it is, is selfish. The individual wants wealth at any cost and by any means, and for the pleasure he, as an individual, may get from it. It is our notion now of greatness to be accounted the wealthiest member of our family, of our town, or our county.

Then, the question is, if we are not making any real advancement in civilization, what should we do to remedy matters? We must know what are the true and worth while values in life.

We must, it is true, have houses and railroads and bonds and money, but these things must be worked for only to help ourselves and humanity at large in things cultural, things intellectual. Instead of having cut-throat economic competition, we should have contests among individuals and nations in art, music, literature, science, and so on.

Our political ideals should be unselfish. The League of Nations has a good theory back of it—the spirit of altruism. When men begin to think something of the other fellow's just rights, then wars will be a thing of the past.

We need a spiritual progress, new and broad ideas of brotherly love, true, non-sectarian religious principles, in which all men of all countries and of all occupations can believe and work for ends good for



all and harmful to none. The basis of such a religion must be unselfishness—altruism. Such a religion must be taught by teachers who have hearts as well as minds.

In short, in order to be civilized we must know what civilization is. We must realize that it is not material advancement for its own sake, that it is not competition that will destroy our fellow man or our fellow nation,—but that it is a sufficient and ample amount of wealth possessed by both individuals and nations, directed unselfishly towards the ultimate good of all. And, further, we must possess what Newman would call a *liberal education*, or what Matthew Arnold would call *culture*. We must come face to face with the great truth of all time,—that there is something in this world bigger, better, and in every sense more valuable than automobiles, or fine clothes, or dollars and cents. That something is a solid appreciation of the finer things in life, the things that make for bodily health and comfort, intellectual excellence, and a linking of this life to the spiritual life.

(1) Read the original in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and note the differences between it and the student composition.

(2) Which is the clearer, the original or the retold composition? Which is the more definite and concrete in its language?

(3) It is often a good idea to substitute more familiar illustrations than those in the article, or add new ones. Have the new or added illustrations here made clearer the talk?

(4) Did the speaker bring out the most important items contained in his source?

**42. Plays.**—Plays might be classed under one of the four forms of discourse, so far as the purpose of the dramatist is concerned. But we must bear in mind certain facts about the make-up of a play that we do not have to deal with in the forms of discourse.

Plays are difficult to carry over into oral composition. They have acts, scenes, stage directions, many characters, and often complicated plots, and dialogue, —all of which must be handled in such a way as to give your hearers an appreciation of the play in its entirety. A play is more highly condensed than a short story or novel. Much of the story in a play is revealed by acting. Here you can give comparatively no aid. Characters are shown by what they say and how they say it—by their tone of voice and action. There are so many characters in a play, and the characters of good plays are so complex and individual that you must needs study your play very closely so as to know each character. On the stage one character is regarded as enough for one actor to represent. You must represent several in giving a play as an oral composition.

The most satisfactory way to deal with a play is to

re-tell it as if it had no scenes or acts; make a connected narrative of it as if it were a short story. Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* illustrate what is meant. Only the important characters should be given. Sub-plots and minor incidents must be omitted. Too frequent dialogue would prove disastrous. Modern one- or two-act plays are more easily told than the older plays of five acts.

Although re-telling a play is an arduous task, you should attempt it, for working at a difficult thing will help you in what is easier; and, too, you will often have occasion to tell some friend the plot of a play you have read or seen.

#### 43. Suggested Sources of Plays for Oral Compositions.—

##### (a) Magazines—

- (1) *The Drama* (quarterly magazine of new plays).
- (2) *Poet Lore* (new plays, literary articles).

##### (b) Modern Dramatists—

- (1) Barrie, J. M.
- (2) Galsworthy, John.
- (3) Gregory, Lady Augusta.
- (4) Howells, W. D.
- (5) Jones, Henry Arthur.
- (6) Maeterlinck, Maurice.
- (7) Phillips, Stephen.
- (8) Pinero, Arthur Wing.
- (9) Rostand, Edmond.

(10) Singe, John M.

(11) Yeats, William Butler.

**44. Poems.**—To recast a poem for an oral composition does not require so much labor and skill as to recast a play. But in changing an author's thought from poetry to prose, you cannot but cause the original piece to suffer a great loss, since much of its beauty and value depends upon its rhythm and poetic language. But in spite of this harm, many narrative poems can be turned into most excellent oral compositions.

**45. A Few Poems That Could Be Told as Oral Compositions.**—

- (1) Arnold, Matthew—*Balder Dead; Sohrab and Rustum.*
- (2) *Beowulf.*
- (3) Burns, Robert—*The Cotter's Saturday Night.*
- (4) Byron, Lord—*Mazeppa.*
- (5) Chaucer, Geoffrey—*Canterbury Tales.*
- (6) Coleridge, Samuel Taylor—*The Ancient Mariner.*
- (7) Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth—*Evangeline; The Courtship of Miles Standish.*
- (8) Tennyson, Alfred—*Lady of Shalot; Maud; Idylls of the King; Enoch Arden.*
- (9) Wordsworth, William—*Michael.*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SECOND FORM OF ORAL COMPOSITION

**46. What the Second Form Is.**—In Chapter II we saw that the second form is telling what you have already thought out and put into some logical order. Your material may come from books, newspapers, and magazines; or from conversations and lectures; or from your own experience. Your composition may be a collection of facts from a great many sources. It should be such, unless it comes from your experience.

In the second form you do for your oral composition very much what you would do for a written composition. It is original so far as the selecting and arranging of material, and the language are concerned. But instead of writing out what you have to say, you talk it out. It is more personal than the first form, because it is more the real work of the individual giving it. And since it is your own composition, you ought to tell it with more ease and interest. Not only are you not bound by some one else's selection and arrangement of material, but you are not hindered by some one else's style and diction.

**47. Sources from Which You Can Get Material.**—

(a) *From books, magazines, papers, and other printed matter.* Read with a purpose as to how you are going to treat your subject. You had better have

in mind some definitely phrased title, even though you do not state this exact title in your talk. Read in more than one place; the more sources you have, the better. This wide reading will prove good practice in helping you to assimilate material from different writers into a new, unified composition of your own.

(b) *From what other people may tell you.* Often you can gain valuable information from lectures, conversations, and personal interviews with people who know something about your subject.

(c) *From what you already know about the subject.* This method is an easy and commendable way for obtaining material for your talks. If you have lived in Mexico a year, you should be able to give a good discussion on "Some Mexican Dishes," "A Mexican Bull Fight," and such topics as would interest people who had never been to Mexico. Or, if you have not traveled, and do not have a large experience to draw from, tell of some personal experience of yours. Do not think that to give a good composition you must have undergone something wonderful. Much depends on your style of telling a thing. You can take a commonplace incident and touch it with life and make it highly interesting.

(d) *From what you may discover through experience.* Is there accessible to you a stone quarry, a stock farm, a factory? Visit these with the purpose of gaining new, accurate, and first-hand knowledge which you are to give orally to others.

Never choose the commonplace when you can choose something better. But remember that the commonplace if well told is no longer commonplace.

**48. Selecting Your Material.**—No definite rules can be given as to what you are to include and what to omit. Consider your own interest, your audience, and the occasion. Then, too, do not forget your important principle in written composition—the principle of unity, that is, including only such material as really belongs under your title, points that give the hearer an impression of oneness in your talk. You should bring in nothing, however interesting it may be, which does not help to develop your subject. Let us suppose, for example, that you know how tobacco is grown, harvested, and prepared for market. Perhaps you decide to talk on “How Tobacco is Harvested,” and you include in your talk an account of how the farmer knows when his product is “ripe,” how he may either cut the stalk or pull the leaves (all depending upon the soil and weather conditions), how he puts it into large and almost air-tight barns to “cure” it by means of fires built in furnaces that run along the dirt floor of the barn. Your exposition should end when you have explained how and why the farmer stores his tobacco in a large “pack-house,” where it remains till he is ready to “strip” it, that is, prepare it for market. This latter process, although a highly interesting one, you should not include in your talk, for you are telling “How Tobacco is Harvested.” Nor should you, under this same

title, describe the method of planting tobacco. If you desired to include one of these items, you would necessarily have to change your title so as to cover the additional matter. But even then your attempt to cover so much ground would make your composition hazy and incomplete in the development of necessary details.

**49. The Order of Arranging Material.**—After you have thought about what you are to include, your next step is to determine where you are to put the different topics, or divisions, in your talk. The following orders of arranging material will be of service to you. Decide which order best suits your talk—have a reason for that order, and follow it consistently, unless some other plan appears more satisfactory. Sometimes a combination of orders may be desirable.

(a) *The time order.* The time order is no doubt the simplest to follow. It is merely taking up things in your talk in the order in which they would take place in actual life. If you were telling of a trip you took, you would perhaps employ this order. Or if you were explaining how to run an automobile, you would tell in the first of your talk the first thing a learner would have to know or begin doing. Then you would continue with what should be done next.

(b) *The physical relationship order.* The physical relationship order means that you discuss things according to their physical relationship to one another. It often involves the idea of the nearness of



one object to another. Your book of physiology that describes the human hand may begin with the thumb. The next thing discussed is that which is physically nearest, the first finger,—and so on with the remainder of the fingers, each one described as it stands nearest to the previous one. Sometimes, however, the items which should be discussed together may not be near each other, but may have some other physical relation. If, in explaining the mechanism of an engine, you speak of a lever at one end that operates a valve at the opposite end, you are using the physical relationship order.

(c) *The mental relationship order.* This order is similar to the one just discussed. It says that things closely related in thought should be put close to one another. The author of a grammar, when he comes to the chapter on the parts of speech, first defines and discusses the noun. He does not then take up the preposition or the participle, but he very logically next deals with that part of speech which in our minds is most related to the noun, namely, the pronoun. Then follows the adjective and other parts, accordingly as they are related to those that immediately preceded.

(d) *The order of going from the simple to the complex.* Most of our books of science are built on this plan,—books of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and so on. The first few propositions in geometry are very simple as compared with those some twenty pages farther on. Not only are many of our science

texts written in this order, but the whole of our educational system is quite logically based on this principle of beginning with what is simple and advancing to what is more difficult. You should employ this method in dealing with topics that are not well understood by your hearers.

(e) *The climax order.* This order consists in arranging your material so that there will be a gradual advance in the importance of topics, the most important coming last. It is a kind of persuasive order, one appealing to our feelings. Do not employ it too frequently, or let it be shown in a noticeable manner that your arrangement is climax, because it is somewhat exclamatory and emotional.

(f) *The interest or prejudice order.* Here you tell at the first of your talk what will most likely catch the attention of your hearers, or remove any prejudice they may have against you or your subject. Suppose you wished to talk on "How the Social Life of Ants Resembles the Social Life of Man." If you believe your hearers are not especially interested in this topic, you had better give at the first of your talk some point that will appeal to them immediately. You might do this by bringing in an unusual, unexpected statement about a certain species of ant in South Africa, the fact that these ants have what is known as "milch cows." Or, perhaps your hearers are prejudiced against what you have to say. In this case you should present at the beginning of your talk the point you think they will have the least objection

to, the one they will come the nearest to believing. This point itself may be worth little or nothing, so far as the development of your subject is concerned; but indirectly it is of immense value if your hearers accept it. For when they accept one statement from you, they will be more inclined to accept another; they get into the habit of agreeing with you.

**50. Some Things You Should Avoid Doing.**—You may feel inclined to employ some of the following methods, because you have found them helpful in public speaking, and because you think they ought to aid you in giving a better oral composition. But remember that public speaking is more formal, more lengthy and more detailed, and supposed to be more accurate than oral composition. At first these things may seem to aid you in giving longer and more accurate talks, but you will not, at the same time, be improving your informal oral speech.

(a) *Do not memorize what you are to say.* (See Sec. 27.)

(b) *Do not write out what you are to say.* If you write out your talk, you will have a tendency to try to recall how you expressed yourself in writing. Writing out your talk beforehand destroys that spontaneity and freedom so desirable in oral expression.

(c) *Do not talk from notes.* (See Sec. 28.)

(d) *Do not take notes on what you expect to give as an oral composition.* Note-taking here applies to your culling of facts from magazines, books, and other sources from which you may obtain informa-

tion. You will be tempted to jot down points from your readings and from other sources, with the idea of looking over them later, preparatory to giving your talk. One of the aims of oral composition is to get you into the habit of reading or observing important things in different places and of assimilating and digesting these facts so that you will be able to retain and re-tell them in an orderly fashion.

(e) *Do not make a written outline.* You should, it is true, know what points to talk on and in what order they come, but the outline should be the simple mental outline previously discussed. This kind of outline will prove to be much more workable than you think, and when you have once accustomed yourself to using it, you will not care to employ the written outline as an aid to oral work.

(f) *Do not make yourself too prominent in your talk.* This advice applies to compositions in which you are an actor or play some part. Other people do not like to hear us talk too much of ourselves; to offend your hearer is to lose him.

**51. How to Begin Your Talk.**—State at the first of your composition what you are to talk on, and give such brief introductory matter as will set your hearers at ease and cause them to be interested. Then enter at once into your real subject. Do not indulge in unnecessary preliminaries, finicky exactness and commonplace details about weather conditions, unimportant names, and irrelevant dates. If these things have no bearing on what you are saying, omit them.

**52. How to End Your Talk.**—You should plan beforehand how you are to conclude. Very few of your compositions will need a conclusion or summary. Plan to finish with a strong, forceful point. And when you have given that, stop.

**53. Narration.**—It is not advisable to attempt an original short story in the second form. The short story is a difficult thing to write out when you have plenty of time to study it, arrange its parts in their proper place, and set forth each character with dialogue suitable to that character. Tell a joke or prank played on yourself or some one else; tell about a trip or a personal experience.

The following topics are intended as merely suggestive for narrative oral compositions. They may help you to think of something similar and better.

- (a) My Experiences as a Runaway from Home.
- (b) The First Formal Entertainment I Ever Attended.
- (c) My Trip into a Coal Mine.
- (d) Some Freshman Experiences.
- (e) Snipe-Hunting with Father (how the joke was turned on the joker).
- (f) My Biggest Scare.
- (g) A Day of Bad Luck.
- (h) A Case of Mistaken Identity.
- (i) Locked Out at Night.
- (j) The Time I put a Rubber Snake in my Room-mate's Bed.

*A Narrative Oral Composition*

## SOME OF MY CANVASSING EXPERIENCES

Some two summers ago I tried to sell aluminum ware in the coal mining sections of . . . . Almost every day I fell heir to some rich and unusual experience. Most of them are amusing to me now, but they were not so while they were happening.

I didn't canvass every house, but only those that looked "likely." One cloudy day I sized up a newly painted cottage, with a beautiful, smooth lawn and a brick walk, as being a place where people of good tastes lived. So I went in. In less than ten minutes I had sold the lady of the house over fifteen dollars worth of aluminum. When I completed the sale, I started to go, but it was raining too hard for me to brave it without an umbrella. So I waited for the shower to pass. The lady was very pleasant. She was well dressed, and everything about the house looked neat. She gave me some excellent doughnuts; and talked to me about her husband's work as manager of one of the large stores so common in mining towns. She struck me as having a rather good education and of being able to talk intelligently. We were talking away when I noticed that the rain had stopped. So I was leaving. But just before I closed the door she asked me in a kind of quaking voice, "Say, mister, do you happen to have any chewing tobacco? I'm about to die for a chew." I was sorry to disappoint her by having to answer "No."

In this same town I had another experience that was a bit different from the lady-tobacco one.

I always like to see my prospective customer at a distance, so that I can have time to "size him up" and know how to tackle him. It's rather a set-back to step up to a door and ring the bell and get all fixed in mind that a kind, motherly-looking lady is going to meet you with a "Why, come right in," and then be met scornfully by a lantern-jawed man who yells out "Whaddayawant?" Well, at this cozy house on the corner I knew there must be a lady who'd answer the bell, for I could see her moving about in the front room. I rang twice, with long waits after each ring, but still I could hear the lady walking about in the front room. I then "accidentally" passed in front of the window twice. She saw me and came to the door. I spoke to her, but she didn't bat an eye or say a word. She turned and went back, but was right back again with a long ear trumpet that looked like Balboa's blunderbuss. I explained over this "long distance" my business. She seemed interested, and invited me into the cook room. She was dazzled with all the wonderful things I had to say about my ware. I had sold her some twenty dollars worth of goods, and we were still talking about my marvelous non-burning pie plate. I held the "blunderbuss" in my left hand and talked to her through the muzzle, and at the same time manipulated a pie plate with my right hand. I had about sold her half a dozen of these pie plates, when the door was

pushed open by a large bull dog. He didn't have anything to say but seemed to want a bite. So I moved towards the table. The lady spied him and squalled out to me, "Jump on the table!" I did. And he did. Then she tried to hold him off with the "blunderbuss," but he wouldn't hear to that. He got me—or rather my coat—by the shoulder. But it wasn't a new suit, and the bite didn't hold. I stole out through the door and slammed it in his face. I got safely out of the yard and then stopped running to look around. Everything was quiet where I had been, but I was suspicious of a watchful-waiting policy and didn't return for my sample case of aluminum ware. Next day I gave a husky truck driver a little note to the lady, requesting the return of my sample case. I got it, but one pie plate was badly bent up. The driver must have thought I was a coward, for he charged me two dollars for his service.

**54. Description.**—Well known, peculiar, or unusual persons and things are good topics for description. (See the talk on the "Turtle Man," page 186.) And so are famous places, objects, and great events.

Employ as concrete language as possible. Use words indicating motion and sound, and other expressions that appeal to our senses. Many great thinkers tell us that all our knowledge is gained through our senses; hence the significance of words appealing to



our senses. Describe your object in more than one position or attitude. If the object is a person, show him still, in motion, talking, and so on.

The abundant use of comparison to familiar things is most suggestive and helpful. Select such comparisons as will bring out your attitude or feeling towards the object described. In the description below, Irving wishes to arouse in the reader a feeling of humorous contempt for Ichabod Crane. Note his use of concrete words and ridiculous comparisons:

“His head was small, and flat at the top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weathercock perched upon his slender neck to tell which way the wind blew.”

The student who remarked that her teacher had “a mouth like a tiny buttonhole” said much in little. Subtle shades and distinctions are thus brought out by apt comparisons. An appropriate suggestion is better than a direct description, because we can read between the lines; it gives our imagination room to play.

In describing people, you can add to your oral theme by imitating the voice of the person described. This is one way in which oral work surpasses written. You can suggest a particular brogue, a nasal whine, or a drawl. But be on your guard not to overdo these imitations.

Long descriptions within themselves are generally dry and tiresome. Description is better when mixed with narration.

**Suggested topics for description :**

- (a) The Smallest (or Largest) Man I Ever Saw.
- (b) A Big Strike.
- (c) Theodore Roosevelt Speaking.
- (d) A Well-known Person on the Campus.
- (e) When Dignity Slipped on the Ice.
- (f) Mount Vernon (or some other famous place you have visited).
- (g) The Statue of Liberty.
- (h) The Mammoth Cave (or some such natural wonder you have witnessed).
- (i) The Interior of a Large Battleship (or Passenger Steamer).

**55. Exposition.**—Most of your talk will be in exposition, for it contains the best and largest amount of good material. And, also, an expository oral composition of the second form is, for the average student, the easiest type to handle.

The first thing you should do in an expository composition is to decide on your subject, that is, the general thing you are to talk on, whether football, fishing, hazing, or the honor system. After settling this question, then determine what phase of that subject you are to treat. In doing this, you are limiting the scope of your treatment. A talk on "Fishing" would certainly be too general, but one on "How I Fish for Trout" would force you to confine yourself within definite bounds. This business of narrowing down your subject to fit a specific title is helpful to both you and your hearers. No person can talk well

on a general subject, because there is so much that can be said that it is difficult to know just where to take hold, to know what to say first. The result of a general talk is a floundering around and saying nothing that counts or impresses.

Having selected your title, you are now ready to divide your topic into two or three main headings. These divisions constitute your mental outline. If you do not remember clearly the different orders of arranging material, turn to section 49 and re-read it. Suppose your title is "How I Fish for Trout." Perhaps the following points come to you at random: 1. *Playing for and landing the trout*; 2. *The kind of tackle and bait*; 3. *The best place for trout-fishing*. Now, common sense will tell you that you should not begin your talk with the first point. What, then, is a good order to use in telling how to do things? One of the orders that will cover most *explaining* cases in the *time order*, telling of things in the actual sequence that you would perform them in life,—telling in the first of your talk what should be done first, and in the second part, what should be done second, and so on. If you apply the time order to the headings above, you would have the following mental outline:

1. The kind of tackle and bait.
2. The best place for trout-fishing.
3. Playing for and landing the trout.

Probably you are wondering whether you should subdivide your main headings. In general, it is best

not to do so. If your talk is to be a long and complicated one, you might have some minor divisions in mind. The trouble with employing subdivisions is that you will be formal, and what you say will have the tinge of a public speech. You must have freedom so as to have naturalness and spontaneity of expression.

You need not give, in exact words, the title of your talk. Certainly you should not show too plainly the skeleton-work of your composition. The title and mental outline are the machinery and checks that prevent your bringing in matters that are irrelevant and incoherently related.

Suggested topics for exposition :

- (a) How I Fish.
- (b) How to Make (a certain kind of cake, candy, etc.).
- (c) How I Study Latin.
- (d) The Modern Process of Match-making.
- (e) The Meaning of "Blood Pressure."
- (f) What the Farmer Can Do to Keep His Boy on the Farm.
- (g) How to Care for Rabbits.
- (h) How to Bud and Graft Trees.
- (i) How a Gasoline Engine Works.
- (j) Our First Impressions of People—Reading Character.
- (k) The Development of the Seedless Orange.
- (l) How to Print Pictures.

- (m) The Qualities it Takes to Make a Good Salesman.
- (n) The Difference Between Culture and Refinement.
- (o) The Habit of Losing One's Temper.
- (p) The Student Who Works His Way Through College.
- (q) Beginning One's Vocational Education in Preparatory School.
- (r) Social Lies and Business Lies.
- (s) The Kind of "Chum" I Like.

### EXPOSITORY ORAL COMPOSITIONS

The talk given below on the League of Nations was made soon after the signing of the Armistice. It is printed here to suggest how you can treat a topic of current interest, using magazines and newspapers to obtain information to date. Some of the ideas contained here were read by the student in the editorial and news columns of papers issued on the day the talk was given.

#### 1. THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations has perhaps created more interest, and is more widely discussed than any other similar thing in all the world's history. It ought to be, for it will influence more people—if adopted—than any constitution or treaty ever has. A League of Nations in some form now seems practically cer-

tain, but just what that form will be it is not now clear.

In England and the United States, opinion about the League is divided. Some people think the League is idealistic and impractical. Others think it is practical and will prove a success. The people of France are doubtful about its success. They are afraid it will not have power to enforce its will. The French are unwilling to rely wholly on it for protection. They are afraid Germany will disregard it, and strike another blow at them. They believe that Germany will do this because she has been so slow in demobilizing her army, because she has been so assertive and has not the attitude of a conquered people, and because she has recently recruited and organized an army of 600,000 men, and placed it on the eastern front for protection against Russia. France feels that Germany does not need such a large army for protection, but that Germany is merely using the trouble in Russia as an excuse for maintaining a large army that is really intended to strike France with. The majority of the people of Italy are in favor of the League, and believe that it is the solution of many of the problems of peace and war.

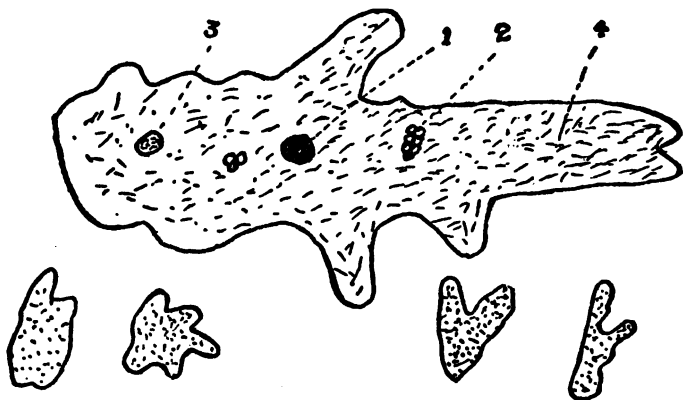
Whether the League will be successful or not, no one can tell. It is such a tremendous undertaking that we are in but a poor position yet to pass solid judgment on it. I saw a cartoon the other day that dealt with the League of Nations idea. The cartoon was divided into four parts. One part represented

Columbus starting on his voyage and people saying, "It can't be done." Another part showed Fulton starting his trial trip with his boat, and the people on the bank saying, "Visionary, impractical." A third part represented the signing of the Articles of Confederation and the people of Europe saying, "It will never be a success." The last scene represented the framing of the Constitution of the League of Nations and the people saying, "It can't be done—visionary—impractical—it will never be a success." Just because the Articles of Confederation led to a stronger union of the states is no sure sign that the League of Nations will act in the same way and lead to a stronger union among nations. The people of the states were bound together by a common sympathy, while each nation has its own selfish interests and desires. How the League works will depend upon the people. It can be made a success if the people of all the nations belonging to the League are determined to make it a success. Each nation must stand by the decisions of the League, and must be willing to furnish aid when force is required to settle any question. Each nation must be willing to take its armed forces outside its own territory to enforce the laws of the League. These things must be done whether the nation is involved in the difficulty or not.

The following oral composition illustrates how a student may select his material from different sources—from what he has heard some one else say about the

subject, from what he has read, and from what he personally knows,—and then work these facts into an orderly unit. The student who gave this composition obtained her facts from lectures in the classroom, from her readings, and from her microscopic and experimental work on protozoa.

## 2. PROTOZOA



I am going to talk about the protozoa, the most simple and lowest members of the animal kingdom. I shall take the amœba as a specific type of the class protozoa. Under the microscope—you can't see this animal unless you use the microscope—it appears like a small, almost transparent, lump of jelly, in which can be distinguished a thin outer rind and an inner substance. The first is known as the *ectoplasm*, and the latter as the *endoplasm*, or what is commonly



called *protoplasm*. The amœba is a one-celled animal, and all functions are performed in this one cell.

Perhaps you wonder how this small animal eats and how it moves. It has no hands to bring its food to it. It has no neck like a horse to reach out and get its food. And it has no mouth like a fish to swallow its food. But still, it does eat and move, and I'm going to try to tell you how it does both.

In the first place, the animal has the power of continually changing its shape by throwing out projections. On the board I have sketched a few different shapes of the amœba [see drawings above]. Number 4 of the largest sketch represents a projection. The ectoplasm slowly sends out a projection, and the protoplasm runs into it. Of course the size of the animal is not altered; so when a process is thrust out in front, the rest of the animal must follow it by shrinking away behind.

Its digestive system is also unusual. As its habitat is at the bottom of ditches, ponds and stagnant pools, it must feed on the minute plant life and smaller one-celled animals. When an amœba comes across anything it wants to eat, it sends out a projection on each side of the object, and then the projections unite beyond the object. In this way the object is engulfed in the body of the amœba, where it is digested. The food is taken up by the protoplasm, which dissolves it. The undigested food is thrown off by means of food vacuoles—as you can see in Number 2. These vacuoles expand and contract. The liquid wastes are

thrown off by a contractile vacuole, which is continually in action. This kind of vacuole is shown at Number 3.

The nucleus, in Number 1, is functional in the process of reproduction. The reproduction is very simple. The animal reproduces by fission and sporulation.

In fission, the nucleus divides into two before the body shows any signs of dividing. One nucleus goes to the anterior end and the other to the posterior end. Then the animal splits transversely, and both the daughter and the parent have a nucleus.

Reproduction by sporulation is done only in the dry seasons, when the water evaporates from the ditch or pool and leaves the amoeba exposed to the air. The animal then forms itself into a spherical body with a thick wall, or cyst, around it. Inside the cyst, the animal breaks up into several germs. The cyst is then blown about by the wind, and when it comes in contact with water again, it bursts, freeing the germs. Each germ then takes on the form of a minute amoeba.

The amoeba has a peculiar way of defending itself. It does this by engulfing particles of sand so as to render itself less palatable to larger animals.

At present, this is practically all there is to be said about this animal. Owing to the fact that the amoeba was just recently found to be an animal, there is great possibility for the work of future zoölogists.

(1) Are you able to follow this talk? Is it given in as clear language as such a technical subject could be?

(2) Do you think the illustrations drawn on the board helped the class to understand better?

**56. Argumentation.**—Avoid too elaborate an argument. Keep in mind the following suggestions:

(a) State the general subject of your talk—"Co-education," "Government Ownership of Railroads." Then state in the form of a clear-cut sentence the proposition upon which your argument is based; as "I am going to discuss whether the Government should own the Railroads." You had better give this proposition at the beginning, but you do not necessarily have to make known which side of the question you are on. It is often a better policy to let your attitude remain unknown till you have gradually led your hearers over to your way of looking at the proposition.

(b) Keep before you the main points you are trying to prove, whether or not you state each in sentence form.

(c) Discuss each of these points separately.

(d) It is generally best to attempt to destroy the points on the opposing side by dealing with them as they arise in connection with your contentions.

(e) Be as informal as possible. Get away from the debate style.

*An Argumentative Oral Composition***WHY I DON'T BELIEVE IN SUNDAY "MOVIES" FOR THE  
FACTORY PEOPLE**

For the past two weeks there has been a great deal of talk in town as to whether the "movies" should be kept open on Sunday. Both town papers have had editorials and letters on the subject. Everybody seems to be discussing the question from the interest of the laboring people and especially the factory workers. And so it is from this point of interest that I'm going to talk.

These people do deserve our consideration, sympathy, and help. They work eight or more hours a day, six days in the week, and must be physically and mentally tired when Sunday comes. They need some change from the buzzing monotony of the factory machines. They work in poorly ventilated rooms, where dust and paint fumes gradually destroy their health. Now, if they go to "movies" on Sundays, they are still in poorly ventilated rooms, and not only badly ventilated but irregularly heated. The theaters are crowded. And here is where people are most susceptible to colds, influenza, and other contagious diseases. During the recent "flu" epidemic the health authorities, at the advice of the doctors, ordered the theaters closed as the first public places where the disease would most probably spread. So the working people, who are the ones that need outdoor exercise and fresh air and a general all-around

change, do not get these things in the "movies." But instead, their resistance is lowered; they are subjected to contagious diseases; and their health, in many instances, is positively injured.

Those who advocate the open theater on Sunday say it would be educational for the working class. Theater managers are generally pretty successful business men because they know what the public want, and they give it to them. The managers know by experience that factory people do not care for educational pictures. They don't provide such pictures now, and they probably would not if they were running their theaters on Sunday. Human nature in both instances would be the same. The City Library is open on Sunday. It is well ventilated, warm and comfortable. People can go there and read, or get out books to read over Sunday, if they wish things educational.

Another plea for the Sunday "movie" is that good moral or religious pictures could be shown. Yes, they *could* be, but they *wouldn't*. The same human nature argument holds here as in the educational value of the "movies." Wild West, hairbreadth escapes, and gushy love scenes are the themes that draw the crowds now six days, and I'm afraid they will draw them on the seventh day, too.

So, if we take into consideration two facts, we can see that the Sunday "movies" will not help the factory workers in the ways that the well-meaning advocates claim. First, the people demand a class of

pictures that are not educational or moral in nature; and, second, the theater managers are engaged in their business for the money, and if they show the kind of pictures the public demand, they'll get the public's money.

If the town people really want to help the factory people, why don't they erect a good "Y" building? A good "Y" would have a swimming pool, baths, a gymnasium, tennis courts, ball grounds, a library and reading room. Educational and moral lectures could be given from time to time. The "Y" officials would be ready to help any one at any time.

(1) Was the general subject of the argument stated?

(2) The three main points and the solution of the question constitute the student's mental outline. He probably had in mind some such simple outline as the following:

1. Sunday "movies" would be injurious to the health of factory workers.
2. The pictures shown would not be educational.
3. The pictures would not be moral or religious.
4. A "Y" would meet the needs better.

(3) Which came first in the discussion, the statement of the main points or the proof of these points?

(4) Should the discussion of any points have been fuller?

(5) Is the solution about the Y. M. C. A. out of

place in an informal argument of this kind? In answering this question, imagine yourself a citizen of a town in which the problem of open theaters on Sunday has arisen, and you are really anxious that something of a practical nature be done for the laboring people.

(6) What points could be advanced on the opposing side of the question? What refutation can you bring against the contentions of this talk?

## CHAPTER V

### THE THIRD FORM OF ORAL COMPOSITION

**57. What the Third Form Is.**—The third form is impromptu oral compositions. The word “impromptu” explains the significance of this type. You are to talk on a subject upon which you have made no preparation. The purpose here is to develop your ability in talking, and to give you practice in analyzing a subject, in selecting what is important, and in presenting your thoughts in the best possible oral style,—all without previous preparation and at a moment’s notice. In other words, it aims to fit you to think quickly and to assist you in expressing well what you have thought.

After you have accustomed yourself to easy oral speech through the first two forms, you will find that you like the third form best, because here the compositions are unstudied and the language natural and easy.

**58. Ease and Fluency of Speech.**—Ease and fluency are acquired by forgetting yourself, not bothering about what your hearers may be thinking of you, but centering your attention on your talk. Say what you have to say in the best language at your command, without thinking too much of the correct word.

Professor G. H. Palmer pertinently declares that the reason for our not being exact and fluent in our



speech is twofold: "We let our experiences be blurred, not observing sharply, nor knowing with any minuteness what we are thinking about; and so there is no individuality in our language. And, then, besides, we are terrorized by custom, and inclined to say what we would say by what others have said before. The cure for the first of these troubles is to keep our eye on our object, instead of on our listener or ourselves; and for the second, to learn to rate the expressiveness of language more highly than its correctness. The opposite of this, the disposition to set correctness above expressiveness, produces that peculiarly vulgar diction known as 'school ma'am English,' in which for the sake of a dull accord with usage all the picturesque, imaginative, and forceful employment of words is sacrificed. Of course we must use words so that people can understand them, and understand them, too, with ease; but this once granted, let our language be our own, obedient to our special needs.'"\*

**59. Clear Enunciation.**—The fact that you do not know beforehand what you are to talk on, and that you have not thought out in a systematic way your composition will tend to cause it to be indistinct. Consequently you must make a special effort to prevent your words from running together or being otherwise spoken indistinctly.

**60. Unity.**—Unity, the principle of talking about one thing at a time, of having oneness to what you

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\*G. H. Palmer, *Self-Cultivation in English*.

say, is more important in oral than in written composition. As has been previously mentioned, the hearer of an oral composition hears it only once; the reader of a written composition may read it as many times as he likes—till he understands it thoroughly. Then, too, unity is vitally important in the third form, for you are more liable to wander from your subject here than in the first two forms. In the first two types you have thought about your talk, and know, in a measure, what you are to say.

**61. Self-Possession.**—Because the third form is to be spoken without preparation, you at first may be a bit “shaky”—lacking in self-confidence and full control of yourself. But you are not nervous or disturbed when you discuss a subject in an ordinary conversation. Why the difference between your action and feeling in the two methods of talking? Your self-possession in conversation is due to your frequent and unconscious practice of conversational talk. Your being somewhat ill at ease in oral composition is to be accounted for by your lack of experience in that mode of talking. From the very first, determine to be self-possessed, calm. Frequent practice will bring about the desired results.

**62. Practice.**—The old adage “Practice makes perfect” may not be wholly true, but it is headed in the direction of truth. You might know a great deal about French,—have a large vocabulary, know the grammar, understand the rules for pronunciation, and be able to pass intelligent judgment on some other

person's pronunciation,—but if you yourself never practiced speaking French, you would be unable to speak it. And so with oral composition,—with practice come ease, fluency, self-possession, naturalness,—and all those qualities that make for a pleasant, entertaining talker. You must practice with a conscious effort towards a desired end. Perfunctory practice is worthless.

**63. Your Topic Must be Familiar to You.**—Since you are not to think beforehand on what you are to say, you should have a topic that you are already fully acquainted with, and could discuss intelligently offhand in a conversation. It was once said of one of our former politicians, Martin Van Buren, that he could talk an hour on any subject given him, and at the end of the hour no one could tell on which side of the question he was speaking, or sum up what he had said. You do not care to cultivate this ability. If you are assigned a topic upon which you frankly cannot talk except in a general way, tell your instructor that you do not know enough about the topic. It is harmful to get into the habit of uttering words when you have nothing to say.

**64. Stick to True Things.**—Do not attempt to tell a narrative that has no basis of fact, or to describe an imaginary person or place. You will fail to be clear in what you say, because you cannot visualize what you have had no experience with. You will show inconsistency in your talk. To relate the fictitious in a written composition, or in the second form of oral

composition, would have no serious disadvantages, for here you would have time to work over what you had composed, and make the whole consistent.

**65. Beginning and Ending Your Talk.**—Do not become excited when your topic is given you. Remember that an oral theme is much like an informal conversation. Imagine some one (your teacher, in this case) has asked you a question, and you are merely giving an extended, uninterrupted answer.

Begin talking in an introductory fashion on that part of the subject that appears to you as logically belonging at the first. As you talk, let your mind move in advance of what you are saying, to think of what you are to say next,—just as a good reader looks in advance of the particular words he is uttering. Make an effort in your first impromptu talks to use the mental outline. Flash your mind rapidly over the subject to see what large divisions it naturally falls into, and which of these divisions should come first. Then take up these different parts—thinking of just one at the time. Don't mix them. A few attempts at mental outlining will surprise you as to how well you can do it with a little practice.

Consciously strive to bring out a unity of impression on those listening to you. Let everything you say and your manner of talking stress this impression.

Think about your conclusion before you reach it; reach it, and stop.

**66. The Three Exercises of the Third Form.**—The third form is divided into three exercises, or grada-

tions, which aim to bridge the gap between the second and third form, and which gradually rise from a rather simple type of talking to a more difficult type. Each exercise will be readily understood after you have read the short explanatory section dealing with it.

**67. First Exercise of the Third Form.**—Pick out three topics with which you are familiar, and on which you could talk. These topics should not be related. Do not select such related topics as the following:

1. My Trip to California.
2. Some Interesting Things I Saw There.
3. The Big Trees of California.

Write them on a slip of paper with your name at the top. Hand the paper to your instructor at the beginning of the hour. He will select one of the three upon which you are to talk. Do not think over these before coming to class. The only preparation you need is merely to choose topics upon which you could talk intelligently in a conversation, and to turn them in to your teacher.

*1. An Oral Composition of the First Exercise*

The following three topics were submitted for an impromptu oral composition of the first exercise. The instructor chose the second for the student's talk.

1. Bee Culture.
2. A Tricky Tongue.
3. My High School Military Training.

### A TRICKY TONGUE

I suppose there is nobody in the world—who isn't a "dummy"—that doesn't sometimes find himself in an embarrassing situation because his tongue says things *he doesn't* aim to say and has no thought of saying. At least, I know my tongue is in the habit of getting twisted and saying things I wish it hadn't said. The only explanation I can see for its saying such embarrassing things is that I am miles away in my thoughts from what my tongue is suddenly called upon to say. I have in mind two occasions when it very glibly said what I didn't want it to.

One rainy day last year I was in the town of Winona. I had gone to the bookstore to buy a book. After I had made my purchase and started out for the post office, I saw that it was raining pretty hard. Now it happened that I had no umbrella or raincoat. I wanted to mail some letters so that they would go off on the morning mail. So I tucked my book under my coat, ducked down my head, and made a dash through the rain for the post office. *Klu-blump!* when I was about half way, I had a head-on collision with somebody else who was coming—like a blind man—from the post office to the bookstore. But he must have been a gentleman, for he had presence of mind enough to say rather damply, "Oh, pardon me!"

I was determined not to be outdone in politeness, and aimed to say, "Pardon me." But my tongue must have thought the other fellow was at fault, for it blabbed out, "Pardon you"!

The other embarrassing time came on a rainy day, too. I was at home, reading a very interesting magazine story, when I heard the 'phone ring. I always hate to answer a 'phone call unless it's for me—and not many of them are. But I went to the 'phone anyway, and called out our number. A man at the other end asked, "Is Mr. Jones in?"

I said "Yes."

"I'd like to speak to him, please."

"All right; I'll call him. Hold the 'phone."

I paid no attention to my father's talk over the 'phone, but got back to my detective story.

In less than an hour the door bell rang. I didn't answer it, because I thought somebody else ought to act as bell boy this time. It buzzed away again, and since nobody seemed to be giving it any attention, I *had* to.

"Howdy do," said a pleasant-faced, middle-aged man.

I curtly replied, "Come in."

He looked at his dripping raincoat and wet feet, and said, "No, I guess not; I'm too wet. I'd like to speak to your father, please."

"All right," I said. "Hold the 'phone'!"

(1) Do not forget to make use of the questions on page 45 to test the compositions in the text and those given by students in class.

(2) It has been previously said in the text that it is impossible for an oral composition to be written

out and then make the same kind of impression on a stranger who reads it as it did on those who heard it spoken in its original form. This fact is especially true of the humorous composition. A helpful way to read a printed oral composition (such as those occurring in this book) is to imagine, all the way through, that it is being spoken by some one you know who is good at expressing himself orally.

**68. The Questionnaire.**—The purpose of the following questionnaire is to aid the instructor in selecting, for the second and third exercises, topics that you are interested in, and that you have a knowledge of and could talk on. To assist in this purpose, you should make your answers full but to the point. All questionnaires should be written out in ink (or on the typewriter) on a uniform size of paper, preferably  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  inches. Put down the numbers of the questions as given in the book. Underscore the questions so as to distinguish them from your answers. It is better to write out each question and then immediately its answer, instead of writing out all the questions and returning to fill in the answers. In following this suggestion, you allow yourself sufficient space for each answer. (See page 184 for questionnaire filled out, topics taken from it, and an oral composition on one of these topics.)

#### THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *My name*
2. *My home town*



3. *Year in college\**
4. *Other colleges attended*
5. *Graduate from high school (give name and date)*
6. *Other high schools attended (dates)*
7. *Places of importance lived at*
8. *Kinds of work I have done*
9. *Kinds of work I am interested in*
10. *Sports and games I like*
11. *Traveled (when and where)*
12. *Important or interesting events in my life*
13. *General topics I am really interested in*
14. *Work I am specializing in (in preparation for lifework)*
15. *College studies I am taking*
16. *Study, or studies, I am most interested in*
17. *Additional information about me*

**69. The Second Exercise of the Third Form.**—Your instructor will select topics for the second exercise. He will give the first student who is to talk his topic three or four minutes before the oral composition is to be given, so that the student can hastily run over the subject to select and arrange material. Just before the first student begins his talk, the instructor will make known to the second student his topic, so that this student can study it while the first one talks. In this way you are trained to think quickly, in a

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\* Note: If you are a high school student, change the wording of the questionnaire to suit high school instead of college.

crowd, and while some one else is talking,—on a subject that has unexpectedly arisen.

## 2. *An Oral Composition of the Second Exercise*

### WHY I AM OPPOSED TO UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING

Since this is an impromptu oral composition and the proposition is unexpected to me, I don't know what limitations are set to the term "universal military training." But we will suppose that it means that the United States Government should pass a law compelling all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one to take one year's military training under the charge of regular army officers.

I am opposed to universal military training for two reasons: first, because it is harmful to the nation in general; and, second because it is harmful to the individual.

How will it harm the nation? It is expensive. If we take the population of the United States as a hundred and ten million, then we can estimate that the Government must keep an army of something like a million men in training. These must be clothed, fed, sheltered, and provided for in every way at the expense of the Government. And in case of disability or death, pensions must be given. Camps, grounds, numerous items of military equipment, thousands of officers, and scores of other costly items must be added to the expense bill of running this vast army. We can get some notion of the extraordinary expense of

this proposed military training if we look at the cost of the recent war. For an army of about three and a half million men there was an annual appropriation of \$15,300,000,000. That's for one year's expense of the army alone. The navy and other departments do not come under this appropriation. The expense of our proposed army would probably be one-fifth of that amount. Multiply that sum by the unlimited number of years that this awful economic burden would be upon us—and you can see just what it means from the money standpoint.

But why have military training? Well, the "wise" men tell us that with a large, well trained army we shall keep out of war. I think the League of Nations ought to set a very low maximum on the number of armed men each nation shall be allowed to have. Still further, it might do away with the regular standing army, and allow each nation only its state guard, which would be sufficient to do internal and border police duty. If every nation had only this kind of army, then no nation need have any fear of any other nation, and be competing in armies and armaments. A nation is a thinking and feeling organism, pretty much like the average individual of that nation. In the pioneer days of our country men carried guns. Everybody got the best gun he could buy, and kept it ready for use on his neighbor. The law came along and said, "Lay down your guns." Now since people don't carry guns, they no longer carry chips on their shoulder. They don't keep their hand on their hip-

pocket, because they know the other fellow doesn't carry a gun. There is more peace among the *gunless* citizens now than there used to be among the *gunned* citizens. Whenever one nation shows excessive strength in its army and navy, then its rivals do all in their power to outstrip the strong nation. It's just a problem of seeing which frog can swell up the largest. But the fable says that sometimes the over-ambitious frog bursts.

But some people say we ought to have military training for the wonderful good it does the individual. They say it builds up his physique, trains him to be obedient, to have order and system to what he does, and blesses him in a thousand ways.

No doubt it does help a man physically while he is in training. But he is not going to be in training all his life, and consequently can't get this benefit all the time. If he is going to be a laboring man, he will get enough exercise from his work. If he is going to be an office man, he could not carry out the strenuous exercise, and wouldn't need to if he could. There are outdoor games that give one more pleasure and more normally needed exercise than army training.

But how about the great value of discipline? The day of forcing men to do things is over. In an educated democracy men do what they think is best. If there is an attempt to force them, it results in disaster. But even if young men do submit to being regular and systematic in eating, sleeping, exercising, making beds, and picking up cigarette stumps,—then

when the restrictions are taken off, the men do not know how to act and think of their own initiative in the most simple things. When the restrictions are once removed, the restricted become licentious. The French Revolution and the Russian Revolution plainly show this fact as it is brought out in a whole nation.

(1) Make a mental outline of this talk.

(2) What were the main points the student was attempting to prove? State each in the form of a sentence.

(3) Did he support these statements with as substantial facts as could be expected of one who did not know what he was to talk on?

(4) Which was given first, the statement or the proof?

**70. The Third Exercise of the Third Form.**—Your teacher will give you in class a topic upon which you are to begin talking at once. The topics in both this and the second exercise will come from the information in the questionnaire and from your teacher's knowledge of you personally. The third exercise is the most important of the three, and the one in which you will be given the most practice.

### *3. An Oral Composition of the Third Exercise*

The questionnaire which follows gives you some idea of how to fill out the blank to be found in section 68 so as to provide your teacher with rather full information about yourself. The list of topics following the

questionnaire illustrates how he can select topics with which you are familiar, and upon which you could give an impromptu talk.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE (Filled out)

1. *My name* William Anderson.
2. *My home town* Indianapolis.
3. *Year in college* Freshman.
4. *Other colleges attended* None.
5. *Graduate from high school (give name and date)*  
Shortridge High School, Indianapolis; 1920.
6. *Other high schools attended (dates)* None.
7. *Places of importance lived at* New York, one summer.
8. *Kinds of work I have done* (1) Sold newspapers; (2) clerked in a grocery store; (3) worked on a farm; (4) fired furnaces, and (5) washed dishes as a college student.
9. *Kinds of work I am interested in* (1) Social work; (2) farming; (3) reconstruction problems—political questions.
10. *Sports and games I like* Baseball, tennis, fishing, swimming, rowing.
11. *Traveled (when and where)* From Indiana to New York and back, summer of 1918; went to Coney Island.
12. *Important or interesting events in my life* (1) Came near dying of pneumonia when I was ten; (2) trying to make enough money to go to college; (3) the fact that I am in college.

13. *General topics I am really interested in* (1) Political and economic situation arising from the war; (2) national reforms, such as prohibition and woman suffrage; (3) character study—observing people I meet; (4) farming; (5) education—the new world it opens up to a person.
14. *Work I am specializing in (in preparation for life-work)* May specialize in law but am undecided.
15. *College studies I am taking* (1) English composition; (2) English literature; (3) English History; (4) French; (5) Mathematics.
16. *Study, or studies I am most interested in* English Literature and French.
17. *Additional information about me* I was born and reared in the country. My family moved to Indianapolis when I was twelve years old. Soon after we moved there, my father died. From that time on we have had to work very hard to make both ends meet. I am going to college at a great sacrifice on the part of my mother. I am working my way through college by doing such odd jobs as clerking in a grocery Saturday afternoons and evenings, firing a furnace, and washing dishes.

*Topics Taken From the Questionnaire*

1. Our First Impressions of People.
2. Some Differences between the People of the East and the People of the Middle-West.

3. The Qualifications of a Good Grocery Clerk.
4. Some things a Student can do in College to pay his Expenses.
5. My Trip to Coney Island (tell of some one interesting thing you saw there).

### THE TURTLE MAN

Since you have asked me to tell of some one thing I saw at Coney Island, I'll tell about a very unusual and peculiar man I saw on exhibition there. He is said to be the only person in the world of his kind. He was known as the "Turtle Man," because in certain respects he resembled a turtle.

He was a small man of about a hundred pounds, and was some four feet tall. He was dressed in a kind of theatrical tights, so that you could see the shape and size of his limbs. It was on account of his peculiar arms and legs that he was called the "Turtle Man." His arms and legs, each, had five joints like the turtle's. His limbs were also shaped like the turtle's. Between his shoulder and elbow was a joint; and another between his elbow and wrist. About midway between his hip and knee was an extra joint; and another one between his knee and ankle. So in each limb he had two extra joints. He appeared to have good use of his arms. So far as I could judge, all the joints in his arm bent equally when he drew his arm up. I did not see him stand. I rather think he had less use of his legs than his arms.

He seemed to be in good health and enjoying life



about as well as you could expect a sane person who was an object for curious people to gaze at.

He had never had a fall or been injured in any way that caused him to be shaped as he was. He was born that way. I suppose he is what you might call a "sport," a departure from the normal human class. He was born of Indian parentage in South America. Some English travelers saw him in South America while he was a boy, and persuaded his parents to allow them to take him to England to educate him and bring him up. They took care of him till he was grown. Then he wanted to make his own living. I suppose all the work he ever did, or could do, was to exhibit himself in shows.

(1) Is this a description or an exposition?

(2) Is it full enough for you to understand it clearly?

(3) Imagine yourself in the position of this student: He was called on to give a talk on something that he had probably not thought of in two years. His means of discovering many definite facts about the "Turtle Man" were extremely limited.

**71. Final Word to the Student.**—Now that you know something of the theory and practice of oral composition, you doubtless see its practical value from both a social and business standpoint, and its importance in our modern life of efficiency and accurate thinking. The one dominant purpose of this book has been to give you ease, accuracy, and fluency in

expressing your thoughts through that medium of communication that you will have more occasion to use every day of your life than any other—just plain informal talking.

2-17-11



